

no 53 the magazine of cinema & television fantasy 95p

STARBUZZ



E.T. ARRIVES!

full colour pictures

plus bonus exclusive

THE STEVEN SPIELBERG STORY

harrison ford
interview

and
lots
more!

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ART CRITIC

I am writing to comment on the layout and visual impact of the 'new style' *Starburst*, (Issue 50).

Firstly, the cover reflects the pretentious nerve of the magazine; namely the wording "Grand 50th Anniversary Issue". Such self-congratulatory propaganda is a mistake—it is up to the individual reader to decide whether the issue is "grand" as it may well not be. Also, *Starburst* should be concerned with the fantasy of cinema and television (the wording above the logo states this fact) and not the number of the issue. *Starburst's* 50th anniversary bears little relevance to cinema and television fantasy. The number of the issue is printed above the logo anyway.

Words like "featuring" and "plus" should be omitted—irrelevant. The more writing on a cover there is clutters and creates an image of untidiness. This undermines the impact of the stated highlights. The final cover fault is the unnecessary photograph from *Blade Runner* which ruins the already adequate cover portrait of Harrison Ford. This photograph layout reflects the overall untidy layout throughout the magazine.

It becomes immediately obvious when looking through the magazine, that *Starburst* is trying to emulate the style and layout of its sister magazine, *cinema*. This is a mistake, two very similar magazines encourage people to buy only one and that would probably be *cinema* as it has achieved a superior standard to *Starburst*—despite it being a "grand 50th anniversary issue." The inside cover is pure *cinema*—the large single photograph and the neat, clear credits listed down the side. This is probably the best page of the whole magazine as a result. Neatness and visual clarity are key factors abundantly absent in the facing page which is almost embarrassing. The vertical logo is pointless and it being cut in half is even worse. The inset photograph from *Polygeist* and *Blade Runner* should have been kept within the columns and the 'cutout' repeat of Harrison Ford running is again unforgivable. Never repeat the same photographs in the same issue let alone the same page and cutting bits of photographs out and then superimposing them over others is pointless as well as untidy.

The star and parallel lines leading to the page number at the bottom of the page is unnecessary and only heightens the untidiness further. The page number alone will suffice.

The letters page wasn't too bad when compared to elsewhere in the issue. The photograph of Mr Spock leading to the next page is ridiculous. Never split a photograph or artwork over two pages—the pages are invariably out of line and so the photograph is ruined.

The inch wide columns down the side of the page are again pure *cinema* and are a mistake for they are a waste of space and imply you haven't enough material to fill them. By this I don't mean you cram as much as possible but leave sensible margins, not wide columns.

The *Things to Come* section fared slightly better, with constructive use of the space available. The photographs and columns were in line which is clear and comprehensible. Only gripe though was the reflection of the title on the opposite page—looks like the ink smudged from the facing page.

The *Polygeist* review showed how you get the most interesting photographs and print them very small whilst the dull and unrepresentative photos are printed very large. The two cropped photos squeezed in the edge columns were pointless and the vertical title split another poor photograph. At least the text was in columns, thank God!

Now! The worst of all! Did you have something against *Blade Runner* as you made a real pig's ear of the layout. 'Hunt the text' is a jolly little game readers can play in that what you think is the beginning of the article is in fact the second paragraph—the first was superimposed over a particularly dull large photographic background next to the pointless pair of parallel red lines. The grey title goes unnoticed, cutting into another photograph. Why can't you just print photographs at a reasonable size, horizontally and without anything superimposed over them? The chief victim of this "run the photograph picture" was the trio of "flying car" photographs, set at varying angles and overlapping over each other. I can't think why you put photos and text at angles as it looks sloppy and messy. You may think it looks hip and casually relaxed—well it certainly doesn't. It looks like you've thrown the issue together in a lunch-time break and at the prices you charge for it, the reader deserves a magazine which at least looks as if a lot of time and effort put into producing it.

Over the page, the two proverbial parallel red lines spoil yet another photograph—why put these lines in? They certainly don't enhance the picture and serve no useful purpose. 'Hunt the text' can be played yet again on the opposite page—it's like a jigsaw, trying to find an intelligent order from the isolated clumps of text.

"Sympathetic background" is the only explanation I can find to explain the hotch-potch of photographs and text, supposedly this complimented the Rick Baker Interview—apparently you used hideous layout to enhance the hideous make-up effects.

Page 20 and 21 gave examples of yet another flaw in contemporary publications' use of photographs. Firstly the attempt to alter photographs by deliberately over using 'dots' as a means of reproduction, (viz. the creature firing the sub-machine gun). Secondly, the cut-out of King Kong superimposed over an unnecessary letraset background—what's the point? It looks cheap and immature, nothing else.

The *Thing* review wasn't too bad but again the choice of photographs was wrong. Surely, a large one of the man in flames would have been more visually striking than the helicopter and the explosion. The three small cropped photographs around the edge should have been left out altogether. Rule:

large photographs look much better and impressive than fussy little inset photos cluttering the page up like parasites. At least the text was comprehensibly laid out.

The reproduction of the poster was thankfully square-on and not at acute angles as has been the case in the past and further on.

Why on earth did you split a perfectly good photograph into four separate sections of varying width and not only that you even put the red lines in to muck in up further? Rule: never cut up photographs for what ever reason. Page 30 showed that you were even stupid enough to repeat yet again the same photograph used on the contents page, (Harrison Ford running before two parallel lines). Rule: never attempt to 'enhance' photographs by edging your own backgrounds, insets etc.

Page 38 and 39 were nothing short of mindless. More pretension and pomposity—you obviously assume *Starburst* to be a vital element in the infrastructure of cinema and television fantasy, so you get 'big names' to congratulate you on the "grand 50th anniversary issue." You are fooling yourself. Self-congratulation should at all costs be avoided. People buy *Starburst* to read articles and reviews of current and past films and their ilk, NOT self-complimentary propaganda which only goes to put *Starburst* staff on a pompous ego-trip. Cut this kind of thing right out!

Page 47 was again ruined by messy and unnecessary small inset photographs. They one by itself would have sufficed—without the added line.

In conclusion then, I would strongly suggest that you either give Rahid Khan a strong talking to and drill a little thoughtfulness, common sense and above all neatness into his head. At all costs avoid any supposedly flashy and casual layout attitude as it is false and looks cheap.

If this Khan person can't or doesn't seriously rethink his layout ideas, I suggest you get someone who knows what he's doing. Until this happens, *Starburst* will deteriorate and decay further and you won't reach a "grand 100th anniversary issue" to be pretentious over.

Stephen Crooks,
Lodge Moor,
Sheffield.

Alan McKenzie replies: "To be frank, this is not the sort of letter to add normally print. Not, I hasten to add, because of its critical nature—our readers know us well enough to be aware that we are not afraid of criticism—but because of its sheer rudeness. The fact that this is the only letter we have had which attempts to decimate our efforts on the graphics side of the magazine tends to indicate to us at the *Starburst* office that it is not, as Mr Crooks thinks, a case of the army being out of step. But I'll say no more. Perhaps the *Starburst* readers would care to give us their views on Mr Crooks' points, pro or con. We'd love to hear them. But now, on a saner note..."

IT'S BLADE RUNNER!

Hearing that *Blade Runner* was being shown in Leeds, I caught the train there last week. My reasons were simple. I knew it'd be weeks (or if *Altered States* was anything to go by, months) before our local ABC would bother to show it, and all this time I was unable to read the articles in *Starburst* 50 and 51 (as well as newspaper reviews) for fear of someone giving away large chunks of the plot. (This seems to be a growing fear these days. Am I just paranoid? Did the first review of *Citizen Kane* begin with the words "It's really great the way Orson Welles builds a whole film around a sled called Rosebud?") Besides, as I reasoned coming out of the cinema, Leeds is a great place to see this film. With its grotty black Victorian architecture, plastic shopping centre and persistent rainy grey sky, it's dead easy to stride down the streets, pretending you're Rick Deckard. You can also pretend you're Harrison Ford on the way to the film. You start with the information that *Blade Runner* is at a cinema in Leeds, then follow the trail of cinemas marked on a 1970s map. Immediately you're on a *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-type archaeological quest. Just like the ancient plough tracks, which can be spotted from the air, it's possible to detect, in the facade of a superstore or the body of a bingo hall, the remains of a cinema. It makes it so much more exciting when you finally come across an ABC intact ... and the perspex characters above the entrance confirm that this is one you've been looking for. Nervously, you push the door open, watching out for giant stone balls ...

Anyway, I enjoyed the film, didn't mind the tagged on ending, though I think it would have been better without the voice-over. I can't see why Phil Edwards got so indignant about the unicorn being cut. He can still interpret Deckard as being a replicant if he likes ... he obviously did, although I thought that Betty and Pris' kiss implied that Betty was the gangster, showing Sebastian that he'd been taken for a ride. Similarly, if the unicorn had been left in, you could argue that Gaff was the replicant. When Deckard resigned the Police decided to have second best and programmed Gaff with Deckard's memories, including the recurring image of the Unicorn. The sculpture left outside the apartment could signify Gaff realising his memories were fakes and finding himself unable to kill a fellow replicant.

Also, since no one's mentioned it before, was it intentional to play Holden's interview like a scene from *Dragnet*? The resemblance is even more noticeable when Deckard replays the conversation in his car.

In your articles on the various cuts and deletions, you failed to tell us where the *Blade Runner Annual* fits in. Although artists Williamson and Gerzon appear to have based their drawings on the finished film, Archie Goodwin's script reads as if based on some intermediate version not covered in your chronicles. The narration is better and the clues Deckard picks up with computer enhancement of Leon's photos are different. He even finds the scale in a different place. Still, I loved the *Annual*. Found it much more satisfying than the James Bond adaptation. I applaud the decision to replace Jim Steranko's cover painting (from the American edition) with a cover photo. Good old Jim. Always one for getting into the mood of the piece. Looks like he broke his own fingers before he painted this one!

Graeme Basset,
Grimby,
N. Humberdale.

Phil Edwards was indignant, Graeme, not because of what was cut from *Blade Runner*, but because anything was cut. As it is, Deckard is still a replicant in the released film ... anybody notice that Deckard's eyes reflect light in the same way that the Replicants, the owl, Rachel and Tyrell do? But it is an interesting idea about Gaff, though from what Ridley Scott told us, it seems unlikely that it was intended.

Editor's note: With regard to *Starburst* 50's coverage of the James Bond convention, in no way was the underlining of the word "con" in the title intended to imply any criticism of the event. We apologise to all concerned.

FLICKERS

tim quinn &
dicky howett



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY
MOVIE STAR SOUVENIRS?
HERE'S MARK HAMIL'S
SPARE HAND.....
PINTININ'S COLLAR...
TORCH'S BATTERIES...

CHRIS REEVE'S
FLYING HARNESS...
PETER CUSHING'S STAKE...
TEXTUCKER'S FEATHERS...
BUT WAIT!! YOU
SEE MY
FAVOURITE!



ODYSSEY TWO –

ENTER 2010

"Then he waited, marshalling his thoughts and brooding over his still untested powers. For though he was master of the world, he was not quite sure what to do next."

"But he would think of something..." Thus ends Arthur C. Clarke's 2001 book. Now he has thought of something. Clarke's much rumored, long-awaited sequel is out. The only book that can knock Stephen King off the top of the best-sellers lists – 2010: *Odyssey Two*.

Stanley Kubrick probably has his own copy of it, you can be sure of that. In fact, long before the book, or even the galley proofs, Kubrick would have taken delivery of one of Clarke's five-inch discs – from his Archia word-processor. (Archives II, five megabytes, Winchester disc, Wordstar programme – if you want all the details)

Thanks to Playboy's two-part serialisation, I've been reading 2010 already before my copy arrives from Del Rey Books in America. And I must say, it's reading well. Very well.

American and Russians link up in a mission to the Jovian system to rendezvous with 2007's Discovery spaceshot, check its data banks for the information about... and then, maybe, locate the Jupiter monolith.

They're in a hurry because the Chinese are beating them to finding out just what did happen to astronaut Dave Bowman (Jur DeLuque 2007) nine years before. The Chinese lead first and become victims of "a huge dark mass rising up from the depths... freezing solid as it moved... a black tide wave slowing down all the time... climbing up the ship, building a kind of ice tunnel as it advanced..."

All this before the eight Russians and three Americans, including Dr Heywood Floyd (William Sylvester in 2007) and the wondrous sounding Dr Suvasubraman Chandra-gampallai, touch down on Jupiter...

E.T. NO 2!

Well, hush me mouth... and call me a jackass. Just scratch what I was saying this time last month about *E.T.* Probably moving higher than the No. 5 film in movie history in our next Fantasy Film Chart. It's moved already.

By Jupiter and all the other planets, the Spielberg wonderfilm has now reached the No. 2 spot... in just 66 days of American release!

I mean that's... that's... Impossible is what that is. But it's done it.

If it were not for all the various reissues of *Star Wars* over these fantasy-filled years of since George set it rolling in 1977, I suppose *E.T.* would not only be the film of the year but the film of the century by now.

In fact, *Star Wars* has just come out yet again in America. And despite (or because it's) available on cassette end due for a big network screening soon, it pulled in another two million bucks over its first weekend of business. In ell, the

Lucas film has now accrued some 187 million dollars in film rental money. Spielberg's little wonder is – as I write; and it seems to change by the hour – clocking up rents of about 142 million. In, as I say (and as I repeat, because I don't believe it myself) in a couple of months. That's unheard of!

In its first year, when it also vaulted from nowhere to the No. 1 spot for 1977 (and top film in history), *Star Wars* earned only 127 million.

Yes, yes, I hear what you're saying. Cinema ticket prices have gone up quite a bit since 1977. Okay, let's compare *E.T.*'s two-month take with the last few years' leaders. *Star Wars* had beaten *Jaw's* 1975 income of 102 millions. *Grease*, the last non-fantasy movie to be tops in a year, scored just 83 million in 1978. *Superman* managed 81 millions in 1979. *Empire Strikes Back* made less than *E.T.*'s: just 120 million dollars in 1980... and last year's box-office champion, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* only earned 90.4 million dollars when cinema seats were priced not much less than now.

And, believe you me, *E.T.* is far from finished yet. *Star Wars*'s phenomenon just goes on... well, phenomenonning! Admittedly, its business ducked a trifle and fell to second place in the charts the weekend that *Friday the 13th Part III* opened in all its most trumpeted 3-D gory-glory. But whammo – the following week, it was back on top again, frying *Friday*. Nothing, but nothing that I can see on the horizon, is going to bury *E.T.* for the next month (year?) or so. And that I'm afraid, George and Stephen goes for *Creepshow*, too.

So it is possible – just – that *E.T.* could take out *Star Wars* as the No. 1 film before the end of the year Fantasy Film Chart accounting. And that view comes direct from the horse's mouth. From... Lucasfilm!

E.T. VIDEO

After the film – end, naturally, the best-selling John Williams soundtrack album, and all the choccies and toys end stuff, but not, following a quick court session, some Rhode Island tie-in jewellery – comes the *E.T.* video game. Atari snapped up the rights in time to get the new game on sale by Christmas. Atari is part of Warner (Brothers) Communications, of course, and felt, quite rightly, that *E.T.* game is going to sell up a storm, a helluva lot better than any *Blade Runner* tie-in.

Steve Spielberg added another string to his cock 'n' the walk bow by helping design the vid-game. (Well, he's a past master all the others on sale or home rental). He calls his, "the first emotionally orientated video-game ever turned out." How so? "The game will centre around getting *E.T.* home."

Well, that's better than all the "phone home" gags, cartoons and telephone company commercials.

Thinks: When I first saw the film in May, *E.T.* was just a set of initials. Now it's part of (international) language end "phone home" as is famous, if not more so than "Play it, Sam!" Even Prince Charles and ravishing Di understand it

all now, since attending London's royal *E.T.* premiere which Spielberg and Universal (more like Steven, I'd say) sanctioned in aid of the British Film Institute and, closer still to Steven's heart, our National Film School.

LUCAS EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Look out, Spielberg! George Lucas has spelled out his future plans. Including the final six *Adventures of Luke Skywalker* and four more Indiana Jones films.

Stillin' ell rumours that he is, in fact, quitting while ahead with *Star Wars* after *Revenge of the Jedi*, George has outlined the run of the series. As we'll know by now (don't we?), the first three, up to and including *Jedi*, constitute the middle stanza of the nine tales: Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The as yet untitled fourth movie will be a prequel to *Star Wars* itself – No. 3 in the series. So will the next two, as *Lucasfilm* will shoot episodes 2 and 1 before kicking off in the final lap in consecutive order: 7, 8 and 9.

Harrison Ford, expected to quit the Han Solo role for the next stanza of *Star Wars* films, will be busy enough. His *Raiders*' sequel will also be a prequel, in fact. Shooting by Spielberg, of course, starts in June with a release set for the summer of '84. (So far, the film is known merely as *Indiana 2*). The next three *Indiana* adventures will, apparently, follow on after the *Raiders* story.

JEDI NEWS

For the moment everything is on target for *Jedi*'s May 25 world premiere next June. The special effects work is continuing at ILM until the late Spring. All three top ILM guys, George Richard Edlund, Dennis Muren and Ken Ralston are toiling on the shots, with George Lucas, himself, supervising the work of his 140 ILM men team. With all the staff employed on *Jedi*, it's impossible to ILM to take on any other SFX work until at least next April. Just in time, in other words, for *Star Trek III*. It's what they call planning...

QUITTING AHEAD

In a typically American juxtaposition of good sense and bad taste, North Carolina actor-producer Earl Owensby invited the media to his studio when deciding against a risky stunt for his second successive 3-D thriller, *Hot Hair*. Originally, the big scene in the film called for Owensby to ride on top of a hot air (get it?) balloon. His stunt coordinator and balloon expert, John Lewis, called it off, in keeping, said Owensby, with his studio rule that no stunt can be attempted for his films unless it's 100% safe. And he was saying all this while posing for cameramen atop the balloon, which was securely anchored in place... but still some eight stories high.

Say what you like about his crass publicity methods, at least here's one

film-maker who knows when to quit when he's ahead. And alive.

PSYCHO II _ READY

Australian director Richard Franklin says he's finished *Psycho II* But that's all he is saying. The film, the script, the happenings are still listed Top Secret by Universal. Anthony Perkins, back at the old Bates Motel twenty-two years on, has, however, revealed a little of what's coming down. "In the old story, Norman Bates saw himself as a victim," he comments. "He's smarter now – middle-aged and cured. He realises he has the potential of being dangerous."

Fine but where's Momma? "Oh, she's definitely six feet under," grins Perkins. "In the beginning..."

Aha!

3-D EXPLODES

"One top executive said nobody would ever sit through a 3-D movie for 90 minutes wearing glasses." The speaker is Martin Jay Sadoff. And he's laughing.

Well, no wonder. He's helped pull of the first 3-D feature by a major Hollywood studio since 1960. And now they're all trying to rush into the tri-di act. *Friday the 13th Part III* has provided that audiences will sit (or hide under the seats) for 90 minutes and that if a studio does it right, the returns are great wallop as they thump in the bank vaults.

Paramount reported outstanding business for the first week of *Friday III*. It opened in more than a thousand (specially lensed) American cinemas and was the first movie to topple *E.T.* off its perch since it opened. True, *E.T.* was back on top the next week. But the continuing *Friday* figures have been impressive enough to make all the top studio think twice – if not three-D – about the old gimmick.

Universal, which should have made the first 3-D film itself three years ago and recently cancelled a 3-D re-make of *Creature From the Black Lagoon*, has already announced what it calls *Jaws 3-D*. And reportedly, Warners Brothers is talking tri-di turkey with *George Romero*, John Carpenter, Jos Danta George Miller and others. (Why not Spielberg?)

Produrac Frank Mancuso Jr first had the notion of making the third *Friday* shocker in 3-D about a year before its eventual premiere. Paramount okayed the idea in December, 1981. The movie was scripted (?) in January and started shooting in March, to be in cinemas six months later... when 1,200 *Sinatra* II projection lenses had been ground ready for cinemas.

How the film was to be projected was always deemed rather more important than how it would be shot. As the new *Sinatra II* single camera system was not ready in time, director Steve Miner shot the film with what has been described as prototype equipment, including the Merks Polarised Corporation's 3-Dapic converter. With delivery delays for the necessary camera, the collapse of a Loma camera during locations, plus bad weather and

heving to remember that various bright colours limited the best tri-di affects, shooting slowed down... and only just made the cinemas on target.

Camera operator on the movie was British - Enc Ven Heren Noman. He's now supervising the work on *Jaws 3-D*. Enc's supervising expert for *Friday III* was New York Film School graduate Martin Jay Sadoff. "At last," he says. With good reason.

Martin had been supervising what should have been that first major studio 3-D film since the 60s, Universal's *Incredible Shrinking Woman*. "After doing tests, we were ready to shoot in 3-D when Universal suddenly said they never thought 3-D would work."

"The project was halted and John Landis was brought in as the new director. I quit when Landis said he wanted no part of 3-D and the film was finally made with a new director and no 3-D." And Universal passed the bell to Paramount...

FRIDAY IV

Yes, it looks as if there will be yet another *Friday* The 13th because of the success of the 3-D number. But for the moment, Martin Jay Sadoff and producer Frank Mancuso have bigger ideas in mind. They're planning a science fiction comedy designed to make the fullest - the ultimate - use of the new Sirius II camera.

"We'll be performing an innovation," says Sadoff. "Playing the movie in the theatre, off the screen."

How's that again... off the screen? "Instead of just using 3-D as a window with depth, we hope to obliterate the screen and have entire scenes playing over the head of the audience."

Hmm. It'll never work in drive-ins.

FIRENONSTARTER

Poor John Carpenter. He always was wary of working with the major studios (and, in fact, they haven't helped his reputation that much). But now he's been kicked right in his... *...in*. *Thing*. In a surprise, alaventh-hour decision, Universal cancelled his production of the Stephan King book, *Firestarter*. Everything was ready for John's October shoot - "perfect" locations in Tennessee and people just queuing up for the honour (and the money) of their houses being razed in the film's pyrotechnic highlights... when Universal razed the project instead. Threw it right out the Black Tower window in late August.

The official reason is pure Hollywood double-talk. "Major cast and other creative costs," says Universal man Fred Brost, "escalated the budget (rumoured at 17.5 million dollars) to the point where Universal could not proceed with the project as a viable financial commitment."

You want that in English? *John's The Thing* did not perform as well as expected during its summer release, Stateside. So, he's, like had his chance, baby, and flunked it. That seems a trifle

tough on John. Sure the film was a financial disappointment. Yet very little performed that well up against the summer's (and Universal's) runaway *E.T. hit*. If the studio had held it back for the winter and gone out with another Spielbergian *E.T./Poltergeist* double-act - *The Thing* and John's production of *Halloween III* - business might have been better. Then again, if Universal had not poured 26 million dollars into its Burt "r" Dolly *Whorehouse* movie, the studio would not be feeling the pinch, either.

It also goes without saying that if Spielberg had been due to make *Firestarter* (land rumours are already saying that he might), you can be sure that Universal would have found the budget extremely viable... and probably would have added a few million in the kitty, as well, just to keep the wonder-boy smiling.

That's Hollywood for you. You're only as good as your last film. And the knives are sharper than the critics. Particularly when your back is turned.

TWO OTHER STARTERS

Universal will still be releasing John's *Halloween III* all the same - end night about now over there. It's directed by Carpenter pal, Tommy Lee Wallace, and written, of course, by our own Nigel Kneale. If it survives on release, John says he and his usual production partner, Dabba Hil, will plan a *Halloween* e year from now until... we tell 'em to quit.

And now with sudden time on his hands - EMI might yet get that *El Diablo* Western out of him - John is making a rapid return to low budgets with some offerings from his other company, the his 'n' her's operation formed by himself and his dishy wife, Adrienne Barbeau. They call it Hye White Bread Ltd.

First two out of this chute will be *Mall Rats*, a shopping-mall comedy, needing a fast title change for abroad where malls are more royal. And John's romantic adventure change of pace idea for Adrienne, *Dare The Devil*. That one is scripted by Bill Phillips who wrote Henry Fonde's final movie, the tele-flick, *Summer Solstice*.

And what the hell does Hye White Bread mean anyway? Adrienne has come clean about that, at last. Last time we met, she told me it meant Armenian bread - and she's Armenian on Momma's side. Now she says Hye is the Armenian word - while White Bread is the only way to explain a guy like John from Kentucky.

KING'S LATEST

I don't know how Steve King is taking the non-*Firestarter* news. Philosophically, I guess. He's been here before, remember, seeing *Salem's Lot* announced as a movie, then postponed, then cancelled, then re-written as a television mini-series and then issued around the world as a movie, anyway. Besides which the 1,500 words a day

and two million dollars a year man has been busy on a couple of new works, *Seating Creepshow* open in the United States (complete with NAL comicbook of his script), and doing the talk-shows to push his latest publication, if it really needed pushing, to the No 1 spot yet again in the best-sellers lists.

The new tome is *Different Seasons* - four novellas in one, but far from a *Creepshow II*. Although there are chills in all the tales, one only really fits into King's usual bag: *The Breathing Method* which is about childbirth, King style. That includes as emulsion driver's eyes "widening until it seems they must slip from their optic nerves like grotesque seeing yo-yos."

The new King is his eighth smash in ten years. Time, then, for the critics who once embraced him to start knocking. None more so than *Time* magazine's Paul Gray. He attempts to downrate King by dubbing him the master of post-literate prose: reminding his readers of what they've already seen. He cites, as his examples, several of King's characters being compared to movie soundtracks or strip-cartoons.

"Different Seasons," denounces Paul Gray, "offers a dazzling display of how writing can appeal to people who do not ordinarily like to read."

Not a bad thing, I would have thought. And as for postliteratism, *Time* magazine has been using it for centuries!

E.T.C. 1

Hard on the heels of *E.T.* star Henry Thomas being signed up for another big movie, *Misunderstood*, comes the news that Henry's screen brother, Robert MacNaughton, is back on stage in the play Spielberg first saw him in, *The Diviner*... before filming *Tracker* for David Waggoner. Nothing succeeds like success. E.T., himself, I gather is turning down scripts like crazy. Something to do with him wanting to play Hamlet...

LOST & FOUND

The lost Ralph Bakshi animation feature, circa 1975, has been found, finished and put on release. So as we await his Frazetta partnership with *Fire and Ice*, shouldn't be long before we can sit back and delight in his cartoon version of *Mean Streets* - Hey, Good Lookin'! This was the movie Bakshi was working on at the worst point in his career - when Paramount dumped *Coskins*, after a single weak of little business and much anti-racist picketing at a New York cinema. (Bakshi, himself, was attacked by black activists). Because it felt his network had similar touchy racial overtones, Warner Brothers stopped production on *Good Lookin'*.

That was seven years ago. Bakshi went on to make *Wizards* and *Lord of the Rings* (Part I - still no sign of Part II!) - and kept returning to work on *Good Lookin'* (it was incomplete when Warners cried Stop!). And now it's out - 76 more minutes of Bakshi in the Bronx, mixing trash and flash while looking back at the good old bad days of the 50s. Very little fantasy (apart from some

garbage cans springing to life), lots of reality (if it can be called reality when it's animated) in his usual areas of language and sex. He's cut out the live action originally shot for the film, and concentrates on his four main characters, a very *Mean Streets* duo of greaser Vinnie and his Jewish pal, Crazy (voiced, incidentally by two of the *Scorsese* film cast, Richard Romanus and David Proval) and their ladies, Roz and Eve (Tina Bowman and Jesse Walls).

Funny - until it gets heavy; a bit messed up by the use of flashbacks; but otherwise true to the Bakshi traditions. "Basically, my job is an observer," he says. "Just laying down what happenin'."

FOUND AND...

Could be that the Disney studio will be moving full-time into computer-animation - and catch up with the '80s. It all depends on a literal screen test being carried out now on the studio's *When The Wild Things Are* project - by the company responsible for the last parts of *Tron* this is MAGI Synthesis, the outfit responsible for the computer world in the *Tron* movie. Their chief, Phillip S. Mittelman, says his team can provide realistic as well as surreal effects and is gambling on two months work on a section of the *Wild Things* movie to prove his point. "With the shadings, perspectives and shadows we can programme," says Mittelman, "computer-generated pictures as so good that no one can tell the source." It takes time, though, even with a computer. Marring the normal, hand-painted Disney character cells on to MAGI's backgrounds (a digitized process of colour coding), takes a minute per frame... until the arrival of the combine's new Gold Sul computer when it will be accomplished in seconds.

Once the test-film is complete, the Disney executives will decide on joining the 1980s or not. Phillip Mittelman is sure his MAGI work will be magic and a deal will be set for various other animation features. As he also points out, "3-D is very simple to achieve by computer..." And that, reportedly, is what Disney is looking for with its *Einstein* vehicle for Richard Dreyfuss.

DISNEY'S FLUX

New Disney director Tim Linnar has finely fingered what's wrong with the trouble with Disney, which hasn't had a solid hit in zons. "They wanted a different kind of film and they got it in *Tex*," he says about his debut feature based, like Coppola's next pair, on an S.E. (Susan Eloise) Hinton book. "But there seems to be a disparity at Disney between the new production people and the old, more traditional distribution people. The ad campaign was... boring!"

In short, it's no use Disney trying out new movie forms - like *Tex*, *Tron* and Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* - unless it backs them up

THINGS TO COME

with fresher release patterns. Hunter, due to make two more Disney movies, actually says he's not sure if there is an audience out there for *Tex*. Maybe Disney feels the same. Until, that is, Coppola's more '80's salesmanship proves it by locating that audience.

FANTASIST BUNDLE

Florida real-estate millionaire Keith Barish certainly knows which way is up in Hollywood. With a batch of films due for release, or shooting, shortly, Barish has lately announced a total of 24 other projects being developed. And he's managed to interest several of our directors in them. Ridley Scott and his *Blade Runner* scripter, David Peoples, are back in harness for *Journey to the 14 Presidents*. William Friedkin is making something of a comeback with two other deals for *The Abyss*, from Jere Cunningham's novel and Robin Cook's thriller, *Brain*. Richard Marquand has settled on his first entry since *Jedi*—it's based on the John G. Fuller book, *Are the Kids All Right?*

Ridley is also helping to develop another Barish property, Nicholas Conde's novel, *The Religion*. But he may simply produce that one if, in fact, the idea gels after the second draft. Meanwhile, David Peoples has sold Barish another script—*The Vindicators* for director B.W.L. Norton (who, needless to say, is already due for *Lockdown*).

And to think just over a year no one in Hollywood had ever heard of Keith Barish. Unless they were buying Momma a condo in Florida.

TELEWALKMAN!

Genre movies may be up to date with state-of-the-art effects—but only as they concern the cinema. Not real life. Due on the world market in a few months is the Slicko tv-watch-radio. Yeah, a real Dick Tracy affair, only more advanced. The 1.5 oz watch has both a tele screen and a digital time readout, capable of picking up any of your local channels on a 1.2 inch liquid crystal screen. Sound naturally, comes with the head-set (which is also the aerial), connected with a seven ounce receiver, about the size of a small tape-machine. If there's nothing on the telly, you simply switch to the radio, which has another ear-phone connected to the wrist-set by a detachable cord. The other vital statistics? The entire tv-watch-radio is 1.9 ins. long, 1.59 ins. wide and 0.36 inches deep! The price? Oh that hasn't been decided yet.

We'll probably see it first in the next James Bond film. But shouldn't Harrison Ford have had one in *Blade Runner*...? Tut-tut, Ridley.

E.T.C 2

Wimbledon champ Jimmy Connors calls his new pal, John McEnroe, E.T.—because he looks like an extra-terrestrial. Sure he's playing like one.

CORMAN STRIKES BACK

Poor Roger Corman. If there's one thing he hates, it's sitting on finished quickies and watching bank interest mount as he waits to get his investments rolled at the box-office. Not this summer...

Now, Roger normally does quite a bit of business in the American summer. It's a good time for his kind of fantasy froth down at the friendly, neighbourhood drive-ins. Except that the Hollywood Establishment has long since cottoned on to his little game—and made it bigger by spreading the odd zillions around on the likes of E.T., *Star Trek II*, *Blade Runner*, *The Thing* and... well, you know the year's winner 'n' loser litany. Rog' just couldn't get a look in. He actually opened *Worlds of the 21st Century* and *Forbidden World*—and smartly pulled them back home to treat their wounds once the summer swamping began.

So, the Comania summer is a little late this year. It's under way now, as he puts on the road what he now likes to refer to the funds publicity hype (anywhere) as more films than most major companies. Six in all. They range from pick-ups like Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*, the arty biggie with Klaus Kinski, to Paul Le Mat as *Jimmy The Kid*. Plus Michael Anderson's Canadian shocker, *Balls* (*Starburst 36*) which jolly Roger has (of course) re-titled *The Calling*. And if that doesn't work, he'll call it something else. (Like *Dad's Phone Home*...) He always does. That's why *Kiss Me, Kill Me* is now out again as *Everyone Gets It In The End*.

His umpteenth *Alien* re-read, Allan Holzman's *Forbidden World*, is back on release now that the opposition has cooled down. So's the first of his *Conan* rips, *Sorceress*, which should be *Sorceresses* as it features delicious twin girls fully equipped with swords sorcery and karate. Waiting in the wings is his pick-up of Nick Castle's *Tag* and another *Alien*—*Android* with Klaus Kinski. This promotes to producer and director two more of his apprentices, Mary Ann Fisher and Aaron Lustig.

What...? What is *Worlds of the 21st Century*. Well, between you and me, because Harley doesn't much cotton to the title either, it's really... sss, *Battletruck*.

And you wonder why I call him Roger Comania?

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I'll take money from anywhere I can. I never say no to money."—Moustapha Akkad, producer of *Halloween I, II* and the rest.

MORE JAWS

Just when you thought it was safe, etc., etc. ... Richard Matheson has delivered his *Jaws 3-D* script to Universal... and the original book's author, Peter Benchley, has a new surf saga on the bookshelves, *The Girl of the Sea of Cortez*.

(Can't you just hear the title song already?) It begins well enough, "The girl lay on the surface of the sea, looking into the water through a mask, and was afraid." Now read on and you'll get, as one American critic put it, "an underwater morality play with a happy ending." And a simple moral: "Fabulous events do not seem unbelievable when they occur in a tale." The title character is sweet sixteen. (Hello Brooke...?) The villain is her brother. (Hi Chris...!) The Sea of Cortez, in case your geography is rusty, is the Gulf of California. And our heroine makes pals with the kind of giant manta ray that scared Jackie Bisset out of her brie in *The Deep*. (Whatever did happen to Nick Nolte?)

E.T.C 3

Or Hush mah mouth II... What was I saying in the first of my Cannes reportages *Starburst 49* about if Carlo Rambaldi carries on making such wondrous model actors like E.T., it can't be long before he could make models of real movie stars, old or new, Cary Grant looking 35 in a movie opposite Bardot at 22... Well, I do believe he's done it. I caught up with it just the other day. The models were superb. You couldn't see the wire, joints or the cross-wave toupee, they mostly moved and sounded real well too. They were helped by Industrial Light and Magic, too. You probably now the movie I mean... er... damn... was on the top of my type-writer a second ago.

Ah yes! *Star Trek II*.

MUSICAL HORRORS

Hands up our there if you remember Roger Corman's 1961 horror number, *The Little Shop of Horrors*. No? Oh well, it might be coming back to Britain soon. In the unlikely form of a stage musical. It's recently opened with great success off-Broadway. Yes, a musical about Seymour the Skid Row botanist, working in a florist's and inventing a carnivorous hunk of chlorophyll—a Venus flytrap plant, in fact, which lives on human blood. Lee Wilkof takes over the old Jonathan Haze role of Seymour (his bird now has a number called "Suddenly, Seymour"...). And the blood-sucking hybrid is a great puppet affair made by Martin P. Robinson (and sung by Ron Taylor).

Charles B. Griffith wrote the original movies and used another top Comania apprentice, Daniel Haller, as art director. Dick Miller was in it, (of course). So was a chap playing the role listed as "Masochist in dentist's office". That was Jack Nicholson, that was.

Main contemporary change in the musical script: Seymour named his film plant after his girlfriend—Audrey Jr. On stage, it's called Audrey II.

BARRY'S HORRORS

How The Mighty Have Fallen Part 7, 8, 9, 2... Gene Barry, one-time genre star of *The War of the Worlds* (1953) and TV series like *Bat Masterson* and *Burke's*

Law, has been trying the musical comeback routine. He starred in an almighty flop of an idea called *Watergate: A Musical*, which died in Atlanta long before getting a sniff of Broadway. Barry's role? Why Richard Milhouse Nixon, who else? Nixon sings! Sounds a riot. 'Twasn't.

ACTION ZONE

With an audible sigh of relief from the executive boardroom (the washroom, too, no doubt), Joe Dante started directing Kathleen Quinlan and Kevin McCarthy in a Richard Matheson script at Hollywood's Burbank Studios on September 28, 1982... In other words, *Twilight Zone*, the Steven Spielberg-John Landis hobby-horse felled for nine weeks after the tragic helicopter crash of July 23, as back in business.

Dante is handling the second of the movie's four episodes—and the first of two (maybe three) re-treads from among the old 1959-64 tv episodes, "It's A Good Life". Jim Sheldon directed the original Rod Serling script in the third, 1961/2 season of the *Stirling* series. That's the one about the small boy terrifying his neck of the countryside woods with the kind of devastating powers which has more recently made Stephen King very rich. Rob Bottin is in charge of effects, as he was, of course, on *The Howling*, for Joe.

John Landis has, reportedly, completed editing his first segment (from his own, new script). He's apparently cut out all shots showing the two Vietnamese kiddies who were killed alongside his star, Vic Morrow, in the triple-tragedy helicopter accident. As we go to press, however, there was still some doubt if Landis was fully recovered from the effects of those deaths, and in good enough shape to start shooting his next venture, the *Black and White Comedy*, starring another of the Zone line-up, Blues Brother Dan Aykroyd. Landis' sedation may be over, but (see next story) the litigation.

If the rest of the Zone schedules comes together as first planned, George Miller shoots next, switching from *Mad Maxes* to alarmed airplane passengers in another re-run, "Nightmare At 20,000ft". This Matheson script (which had William Shatner as the passenger seeing... er... things on the wings) was seen last during the fifth and final season of the series, in 1954. The director back then was Don Weiss.

Finally, Landis' co-producer, Spielberg, gets to bat. His tale, surprise, surprise, remains top-secret. He was, at one time, getting Matheson to script a Spielbergian short story. Then, he considered one of his favourites from the tv series. He had 151 episodes to choose from. Whatever Steve's chosen he'll have to move fast, in order to start *Raiders* II on time. He'll have no time for editing, that's for sure.

That's the good Zone news. The bad keeps falling like rain...

ZONE II

Apparently cashing on of the episodic titles – if not the episodic or portmanteau films themselves – a Canadian movie has begun shooting. The title? *Creep Zone*. Well that's what it started as. Whether Romero and Spielberg complained or not, it's now been re-named *Adventures in the Creep Zone*. (Title of the first draft script, by the way, was perhaps more accurate but less exploitive: *Road Gangs*). Executive producer of the piece is Ivan Reitman, the *Heavy Metal* man.

This *Zone* has been having its fair share of problems, too. Small fry stuff compared to Landis and the rest. The film was all due to go in Calgary, until over-hungry local unions forced the company to split to Alberta and Utah. *Superman III* had no problems in Calgary recently. But then it had more money to fling about . . . and probably spoilt the local unions for any smaller budget affair coming to town. Oh, the creeping zoners (or the zone creepers) are headed by Peter Straus and the *Tempest* daughter, Molly Ringwald.

ZONE III

And one more . . . David Cronenberg starts directing *Dead Zone* in January. That's the Steve King, book, of course. That's the good news. Bad news is that the producer is Dino De Laurentis. Pity about that, Dave. And Steve.

STEVE'S NEW SUIT

Poor old Spielberg. He has enough suits now for a whole new wardrobe – for court appearances only. Whenever the man makes a hit, everyone in Film City starts crawling out of the legal shysters' woodwork to insist on grabbing themselves a slice of Steve's goodies.

Wile first reporting on the *Twilight Zone* tragedy, I mentioned that Spielberg has now been sued, one way or another, for most of his output since *Close Encounters 1941* was the only film left untouched by litigation – and, despite some Directors' Guild hassles, *Polygraphist* was clean. Not any more.

Two Hollywood scribes, both so famous you'll know them and their credits as soon as I type their names – Bennett Yellin and Paul Day Clemens (who? exactly; well, Clemens is the son of Eleanor Parker) – have instigated an alleged copyright infringement suit against Spielberg, MGM end, for some reason, Warner Brothers and Lucasfilm, as well. It's the usual story, already stuck like glue to *C3K3*, *Raiders* and *ET*. They claim they wrote the story first and they want some recompense, please. About 35 million dollars will do it. (They must have heard *Polygraphist* has been sold to tv already).

MR AND MRS P

Meanwhile, doing very nicely, thank you, out of *Polygraphist* are most of the family that Spielberg tied together and let no spirits split asunder . . . Craig T. Nelson, who Steve chose for the father

after turning him down for *Indy Jones in Raiders*, has a hefty role in Mike Nichols' comeback film, *Silkwood*, opposite Meryl Streep and Curt Russell. Mrs Poltergeist – JoBeth Williams – has been winning such great reviews for her role as a modern day Wyoming sheriff with a case of cattle mutilation on her hands in *Endangered Species*, that she's strutted her stuff into Larry (*Empire/Raiders*) Kasdan's new script, *The Big Chill*.

And little Miss P, the blue-eyed blonde moppet who talks to the tv set, is now appearing on it every week in the re-vamped *Happy Days* series. She plays the daughter of Linda Purl, the new love in the (finally!) maturing life-story of Henry Winkler's Fonzie. Ain't no doubt about it, a hit film sure gets an actor's phone busy . . .

FIRST TAKES

Bionic Woman Lindsay Wagner has become mum of, no doubt a bionic boy. Hubby is Henry King, one of the *Dukes of Hazzard* stunters . . . The film wasn't much (well, the story wasn't) but the *Tron* video game is just crushing Pac-Man in American arcades . . . Remember Emil Minty? No? Oh how fleeting moment fame is! I mean the boomerang chugging Feral Kid from *Mad Max II*. He's playing a dead kiddie in *Fluteman*, down-under's film version of the Pied Piper . . . If Max was the biggest thing it hit France in '82, looks like it was *Conan The Barbarian* in West Germany where it sank *The Boat*. Well, Arnold is Austrian, remember. I'm looking for a Cockney muscle-man to star in my sequel, *Conan The Barbarian* . . . Which reminds me, Don Coscarelli's *The Beastmaster*, with the oh-so-steady Tanya Roberts, is known in Vancouver, where the title star Merc Singer hails from, as . . . you sure you want to hear this? . . . *Conan the Vegetarian*.

E.T.c.

Happiest kid in all France is Damien Boisseau, aged eleven. And for why? Well, he's seen *E.T.*, four months before the movie opens to the inevitable hordes. Better than that, young Damien is one of the stars of the French version of the release of the film of the year. He's the young actor chosen to dub Henry Thomas' role into French . . .

3D, SERIOUSLY

Another first for 3D. *Moonlighting* man Jerzy Skolimowski's next movie is touted as being the first serious, ie. artistic, use of the tri-di effects. While all the horror trips go on, a surfing item, too, and still more global TV networks dabble in the revised craze – France and Belgium lately joined forces to screen Jack Arnold's *Creature From The Black Lagoon* (1954) – the Polish expatriate film-maker is making ready an opus called *Man Out of Time*, in New York and around Superman country – Niagara Falls. For the moment, it's a highly secret project but appears to be about the life of Yugoslav inventor Nikola

Tesla, judging by the few clues Skolimowski dropped while attending the New York festival. He described his subject as being a controversial genius, and either friend or foe of Einstein, Edison, J.P. Morgan and the Vanderbilts. The film will be shot in Europe, with most of the effects work – mainly experiments with electricity – being carried out by American 3D experts.

The previously announced "serious" film to utilize 3D was Disney's *Eisenstein's* project, which the studio has now dropped and its star, Richard Dreyfuss, is hoping to get it on elsewhere . . . maybe for his own new company.

3D IN SPACE

Skolimowski has a rival, already, in the Japan-American production called quite simply, *The 3-D Movie*. Shouldn't be too difficult to muddle it with all the other 3-D movies. This one will include tri-di sequences of mother earth and the great wide open space up yonder – filmed from inside the Columbia space shuttle, no less.

3D CANNON FIRE

Something seems to have happened to Tony Anthony's second 3D feature, *Treasure of the Four Crowns*, since Cannon chiefs decided to rescue the Spanish shooting. Back at Cannes in May, the first hype posters made it look a rip-off of *Raiders*. Cannon's new artwork is more like *Heavy Metal Meets Animal House*. Maybe Cannon knows something we don't know. Yet.

AS YOU WERE

Dear old Sam Arkoff, back in business with his new AIP company, has to check his notes before plugging his first two releases. Both titles have been changed by their distributors. What was *Forest PrimEvil* is now called *Campsite Massacre*, by ITC in Britain. And Larry Cohen's *Winged Serpent* apparently sounded too prehistoric (pre-hysteric?) for George Romero's backers, United Film Distribution in America. They've re-named it *Q*, that's all. Which doesn't make much sense until you appreciate it stands for *Quezalcoatl*, which makes less sense until you learn (in the film or at the library) that that is "bird (or winged) serpent" in everybody's second language . . . Aztec! I'm sure they'll stick to the original poster artwork and that'll clear up any problems and *Q* will get what it deserves. Qs.

MERLIN ON STAGE

Having risked – and lost? – a packet on *Annie*, Coca-Cola Pictures is the chief investor in a Broadway musical called *Merlin*. The studio's partners in the deal include film producer Ivan Reitman, producer of *Heavy Metal* and *Animal House*. The idea, therefore, is that the same people will make the movie – if and when the stage musical is a hit. Which it could be. Although instead of going for an impressive star – such as Richard Burton or Harris in the

Camelot revival or Arthurian musicals – *Merlin* is being played by . . . top American magician Doug Henning. Abracadebra time on the great White Way! On the face of it, that casting sound like topping Mike Yarwood in *The Michael Foot Story*. Good for five minutes, but not the whole night. Normal rules, however, rarely apply on Broadway.

MAX-IMUM SUCCESS

The French are in love. With *Mad Max II*. Opening at the end of the summer. George Miller's movie just shot straight through the roof. Despite being what's known as the empty Paris seasons, when all, or most of the inhabitants are playing *Mad Max* on the A6 autoroute du soleil, Max won the largest audiences for any film opening in August. In all, some 212,320 people caught the film over seven days at 43 cinemas. (The French, as I've probably said here before, prefer to measure a movie's success by its attendance not its box-office figures. Makes sense too, when figuring our ticket-price hikes).

The previous best August opening in Paris had been for last year's thriller, *Choice of Weapons*, starring the top three stars of French cinema – Yves Montand, Gerard Depardieu and Catherine Deneuve. Even so, they only attracted 166,892 people in a week. *Mad* did better – and also broke *Beimondo's* long-held record for Warner-Columbia's best ever opening week's business – which dates back to *The Burglars* in 1971.

The Paris blitz had much to do with the odd fact that the first *Mad* film had only played around town at the start of the year, following an enormous hassle with the censors over its violence. Even then, after two years arguing back and forth, *Max I* was finally premiered with ten minutes cut out. Therefore, the sequel was well hyped as being the "version integrale". Uncut.

Down-under, the Miller movie also tops the field with seven nominations for the Australian Film Awards. Otherwise known as the, er . . . the Aussies! There's nothing for Mel Gibson and the lads (or lesses) but chances for Miller and Co. in nods for direction, editing, music, art direction, costumes and sound. The poor, bruised and bleeding stunt men don't get a look in. As per usual.

M'SIEUR MAX III

In fact, *Mad Max III* has already hit Paris – and won. He's been turning on thousands in the bulkish shape of top French rocker, Johnny Hallyday. He's the Paris Presley end been on the scene since the '60s, changing his image religiously with every new fashion that came along – from uniform jackets to hippy look. Instead of repeating his usual concert affair, with all the strobe lighting, and what have you, Hallyday opened his new show with a small movie of him in Max-ish leathers and action, post-apocalyptic style. The film then segued into a batch of songs on-stage amid similar sets. Mel Gibson would have felt right at home.

evil dead

Review by Phil Edwards

If it were easy to analyse what makes a cult horror film, then genre fans would be in seventh heaven every time they went to the cinema. But it's really the discovery of a film that attains cult status that makes picking one's way through the plethora of exploitation horror movies which have proliferated over the past few years so much fun. I can remember seeing *Night of the Living Dead* in a little flea-pit in Paris; *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* at the London Film Festival and *Halloween* in a sleazeporium on Hollywood Boulevard. Each time I was aware that I was watching the work of some inspired talent, and it's doubly sad that Tobe Hooper has never been able to duplicate the sheer bravura in subsequent films. More recently Jeff Lieberman's *Just Before Dawn* gave me a similar thrill of discovery. Sadly, Lieberman's mini-masterpiece, thanks to the short-sightedness of Rank Distribution is likely to remain unseen by most people.

But now comes a film that most fans of good exploitation horror cinema are going to get a chance to see, and I really urge all you thrill-seekers to go out of your way to catch *The Evil Dead*, a first film directed and written by Sam Raimi. Like most films of this nature it deals with a group of college kids in extreme peril, but forget it if you think this is some kind of formula splatter movie. *The Evil Dead* is a supernatural horror tale which owes more to the works of H.P. Lovecraft than any other film I can think of. But where Lovecraft never managed to describe the horrors which lurk in the depths of those eldritch woods of which he was so fond, Raimi and co present them in a totally graphic way which just might have you reaching for a barf bag. Yep, *The Evil Dead* is pretty grisly stuff and if the distributors, Palace Pictures, have any sensitivity then they should add a word of warning to the squeamish on all their advertising materials. It's not often that I've seen a typical press show crowd leap with such regularity *en masse* during the screening of a movie.

Like *Texas Chainsaw*, the events of *The Evil Dead* take place over a single night of terror as the ancient gods unleash their power after a mysterious incantation is played back on a long lost tape recorder. The spirits of the dead invade the bodies of the living turning them into the nastiest looking walking dead it has ever been my pleasure to squirm at.

What's so exciting about the movie is the level of imagination and cinematic invention on show. Raimi never goes for the easy scare, and though there are plenty of shocks emerging from all parts of the frame, they are rarely the obvious, and it is this originality in staging and story that makes one aware that we are seeing the first work of a major new talent, easily on par with the early Cronenberg, Carpenter and Romero. Let's hope that Raimi doesn't go the sad way of Hooper.





Raimi is obviously a fan of the first order and probably a charter subscriber to *Fangoria* magazine for the film is full of special effects and make-up, which while not Rick Baker or ILM standard show a great deal of imagination in their design and execution. People are attacked by forest vines and trees, rip their own flesh apart, eyes are gouged out and a man is attacked by a headless corpse pumping blood from the mutilated neck. *The Evil Dead* is about a nine on the disgustometre and would have been a ten had the censor not shortened a couple of scenes of carnage, but not enough to rob the film of its completely visceral assault on the senses.



What's so impressive also about *The Evil Dead* is the enthusiasm with which Raimi and his chums have approached the making of their movie. For unlike *Texas Chainsaw* which leaves a nasty taste after viewing, *The Evil Dead* is imbued with quite a sense of fun—Raimi is just having one hell of a good time scaring the pants off you, and that it does, I guarantee you. Forget the easy mechanical frights of *Friday the 13th*, *The Evil Dead* outdoes them all, leaving you gasping for more. Perhaps the best recommendation can come from Stephen King who calls the film, "The most ferociously original horror film of the year." If you like stomach churning horror, thrills, spills and shocks then don't miss *The Evil Dead* when it comes your way. ●



Review by
John Brosnan

creepsh



HOW **T**he most horrifying thing in *Creepshow* is watching novelist Stephen King (and the author of the screenplay) trying to act. It's possible that he *can* act but you can't tell because of all the mugging and eye-crossing he does as an alternative to a genuine performance. Still, it's obvious he had great fun making the movie and we shouldn't begrudge him a spell of letting his hair down after producing all those marvellous books.

version of those anthology horror movies that Amicus used to make, at least once a week, back in the days when Britain had a film industry. The Amicus film that it bears the closest resemblance to is *Tales from the Crypt* which was based on the EC horror comics, the "nasty videos" of their day. But unlike *Tales from the Crypt*, *Creepshow* emphasises its comic book style throughout the movie by not only featuring an EC-like comic called *Creepshow* in the opening sequences and links between the stories but also by framing scenes with comic book panels and having dissolves from live action to artwork, executed by an old EC artist Jack Kamen, and vice versa.

The EC influence is also evidence in the structure of at least two of the stories with their walking corpses denouements (EC horror stories inevitably climaxed with "full-frontal" corpses making an appearance – rotting, putrid and often so anatomically convincing that you had to keep a barf bag by the comic) and in the final sequence of the framing story which involves a little boy getting revenge on his father for throwing away his comic (the boy is played by King's son Joe who proves to be a much better actor than his father).

Actually the story that worked best for me was the least comic book inspired of the lot. This was *The Crate* based on a story of King's published in the *American Gallery* magazine in 1979 and concerns a box over 100 years old discovered under the stairs in the basement of a university. Soemwhat reminiscent of *Horror Express* the crate contains a living fossil – a hairy creature that is all teeth and claws and very hungry. After it has eaten a couple of people, including the janitor, the excellent actor Hal Holbrook decides that the monster presents a convenient means of getting rid of his tiresome wife (Adrienne Barbeau, also known as Mrs John Carpenter).

The episode that is least successful in my

opinion is the final one, *They're Creeping up on You* which is practically a solo turn for actor E.G. Marshall, if you don't count his thousands of little creeping co-stars. Marshall plays a nasty billionaire with a Howard Hughes-like fetish about cleanliness. Alone in his white penthouse he comes under siege from an ever-increasing number of cockroaches until the inevitable takes place. Despite some good lines, and a witty performance from Marshall, it's all much too predictable and tame to serve as the climax of the movie.

The trouble with *Creepshow*, and the trouble with all those old Amicus movies, is that the anthology structure works *against* what makes a good horror film. Stephen King has been quoted as saying that the idea of *Creepshow* came about when: "... all of the *Halloween* ripoffs started to come out. None of them seemed very scary, and our idea was to find something that would scare people so continuously and so badly that they'd have to *crawl* out of the theater." But you can't scare someone *continuously* with an anthology horror movie because the mood keeps being broken with the climax of the individual stories and the subsequent need to establish a new set of characters and a new situation.

A sense of rhythm is all-important in the making of a good horror movie. It should start off slowly and build up to bigger and bigger shocks all the way through – you have breathing spaces inbetween for the audience, sure, but these don't effect the *build-up* of the mood. In connection with *Poltergeist*, a good example, this has been described as the rollercoaster effect – the rhythm of the film speeds up as you rush towards the final series of shocks. *Creepshow* because of its restrictive structure, can't do this; all it can give the audience is a number of short, separate rides that have no emotionally accumulative effect.

So I doubt if you'll come crawling out of *Creepshow* but you'll probably leave the cinema thinking you've seen a fairly entertaining horror movie with more laughs than shocks and that at least three out of the five stories worked very well (though you'll no doubt disagree as to which ones worked best).

And it's not every day you get to see the world's best-selling horror novelist turned into a pile of green fungus before your very eyes. Pity about his acting though...



just before dawn



Sweeping statement time. *Just Before Dawn* is without doubt the most powerful movies of its kind since *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Its brilliance is primarily due to how director Jeff Lieberman uses the North Oregon locations and a gripping, deceptively clever story that, for once, isn't illogical, and invests it with such a terrifying reality that you just can't help reacting to it, along with the characters, in genuine shock. *Just Before Dawn* scared me in a way I haven't been scared for years.

Jeff Lieberman's track record is impeccable. Cast your mind back and you'll remember his other minor classics, *Squirm* and *Blue Sunshine*. His approach here is just as complex and as naturalistic, again creating suspense by emphasising the reality of the situation and not resorting to graphic gore. But believe me—the impact of *Just Before Dawn* is extraordinary. In any other lesser director's hands the movie would resemble one of those Drive-In titles that are circulating on video at the moment like *Don't Go in the Woods Alone*, but his taste, intelligence and eye for telling incidental detail make the movie a mini-masterpiece within the genre.

The story isn't a million miles away from *Deliverance*, or *Lord of the Flies* for that matter, as five young mountain campers take to the hills to explore a tract of land just recently purchased by one of their parents. There, by no fault of their own, they accidentally intrude into a local family's domain. The family have a dark secret that years of inter-breeding and a primitive lifestyle have caused to fester untamed. With no morals or education, they have lived with violence for so long that "raising the devil" is now a part of their daily routine. The five campers, led by Warren (Gregg Henry), bring with them their urban sensibility and creature comforts, in the case of Megan (Jamie Rose) it's her hopelessly out of context make-up regime, and find themselves fighting for survival in an alien environment.

Everything you see and hear in *Just Before Dawn* has a bearing on what occurs. So watch closely and pay attention.

The film opens with two hunters investigating a decrepit wooden church in the wilderness and shows one of them meeting death in the shape of a serrated machete thrust through the groin. It's the type of scene we've all seen before but it's a measure of how devastatingly well it works here to say that from the first frame you are gripped and already in position on the edge of the seat in anticipation. The violence comes suddenly and without warning throughout the film, as matter-of-factly as it did in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and this heightens our involvement even more.

Lieberman keeps on taking us by surprise with his deft manipulation. In the case of Megan's death, where the major twist in the plot occurs, the nightmare situation is built on and milked with an ever increasing ingenuity that it left me staggered and drained at the same time. Like Marilyn Burns strapped to the dining chair in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, this sequence is *Just Before Dawn*'s indelible equivalent.

Incredibly this gem of a film has been sitting on the Rank Organisation's shelf for over a year and is only now getting a very spotty release with, of all things, Tyburn's production of *The Ghoul*. Despite that, it is worth making every effort to see. Please do not miss it.



Review by
Richard Hollis

the entity

The most dissatisfying thing about a film such as *The Entity* is the dreadfully boring finale. It wouldn't be fair of me to divulge this culmination of boredom to you, in case you're planning on seeing the movie, but it has to be said that even in a wider context the whole film is a bitter disappointment. Remember the terrible *Amityville Horror* that left us feeling totally numb in the brain a few years ago? Well I can assure you that the trend is alive and kicking in *The Entity*. Like *Amityville*, this latest excursion into everything paranormal is supposedly based on actual events that took place in Los Angeles during 1976. A perfectly sane woman, for no reason whatsoever, was menaced by a powerful invisible force that seemed to delight in ripping off her clothes and attempting to rape her.

Director Sidney J. Furie was so intrigued by this strange case that he decided to film Frank DeFilitta's book based on the happenings, and so *The Entity* was born. Furie has had a long career in movies, although his most notable film to date was *The Ipcress File* (1965) and his most appalling, *Dr Blood's*

Coffin (1961). We therefore attacks the idea behind *The Entity* with total conviction for the subject, encouraging a professional performance from Barbara Hershey as the threatened woman, Carla Moran. But apart from her portrayal the rest of the film is about as solid as a ghost. Poor Carla is abused by this invisible assailant, whilst all around her, friends and relatives argue and toss with each other over whether she is deranged or not.

Enter problem number one, an obnoxious psychiatrist Phil Sneiderman, played by Michael Douglas lookalike Ron Silver. He tries to convince her and us that all these scenes of flying furniture, shaking mirrors, invisible fingers kneading naked breasts and window shattering forces are just a figment of an fertile imagination. The trouble is that he doesn't do a very good job, due mainly to the inept script which is at times downright farcical. So much so in fact that I gradually found myself believing more in the invisible villain than in the flesh and blood heroes. All this taken into consideration the effects are quite spectacular accompanied as they are by some heavy-handed crashing sounds. But it soon becomes obvious that if you were to remove the 70 mm and the Dolby stereo, they would quickly become mediocre. In one sequence for instance, Carla's son is attacked by streaks of lightning which at first take one completely by surprise but eventually become so melodramatic that terror soon turns to that of laughter.

Enter problem number two, the boyfriend. Although Carla is married with two children, her husband has long since left her and so she is knocking about with a two-bit travelling salesman Jerry Anderson (Alex Rocco), who has the unfortunate appearance of being incapable of knocking a hole in a paper bag. A tower of strength he isn't and so once again Carla is on her own. Enter the sympathetic parapsychologists, Dr Cooley (Jacqueline Brookes), Joe Mehan (Raymond Singer), and Gene Kraft (Richard Brestoff). They fill her home with all manner of electronic wizardry in a hope to catch a glimpse of the transparent devil. Although they are all witness to some strange luminous phenomena floating about the ceiling, they can't find any really conclusive evidence and only succeed in upsetting the psychiatrist who rolls back into Carla's life like the proverbial bad penny.

Finally in desperation Carla agrees to undergo a special test involving liquid Helium. Liquid Helium? Needless to say things go drastically wrong and the film manages to conjure up one or two moments of genuine terror, when the "invisible force" takes control of the helium cannon threatening to freeze Carla to death.

This is where I thought that the climax we had all been waiting for was about to occur. Would the "Thing" show itself? Well sort of, rather in the form of a giant iceberg, supposedly a terrifying mountain of ice that resembles instead a huge *Fox's Glacier mint*. But no, wait. It's not over yet—heaven forbid—there's still the shock ending. That is, there is no shock ending. According to the final words on the screen the whole film is based on a true story. So *that's* the reason that no monstrous green demon appeared to devastate California. I call that cheating on behalf of the producers, as the poster gives no indication of any true life connection.

Unfortunately, *The Entity*, for which we all had such high expectations, comes across as a kind of coincidental swipe of Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist*. Coincidental because *The Entity* was completed 2 years ago and has sat on a distributor's shelf since then. Perhaps we've been spoiled by the works of directors like John Carpenter, Wes Craven and Dario Argento who *understand* the horror medium.



bloody birthday



Review by Alan Jones

There isn't much blood but there is a birthday party in this Canadian produced effort which may be construed as morally reprehensible in its blatant use of children as perpetrators of murder.

Having seen an example of this taken to its unethical extreme in *Devil Times Five*, I found *Bloody Birthday* in comparison inoffensive, rather inconsistent but watchable all the same. In short, I have seen a lot worse.

Three children are born during a solar eclipse in Central California and the bond that ties them together through childhood is total lack of emotion or remorse. This means they can gleefully dispatch anybody who gets in their way. Like the schoolteacher who won't excuse the class homework on the day of their collective birthday celebrations. Or one of their parents who gets to know too much. It is for this reason that they turn their sights on Joyce and Timmy Russel, who, although they have witnessed the murderous trio in action, still go to babysit for one of them.

Out of an unspectacular series of death scenes, the best concerns an arrow shot through the eye of one of the children's meddling sisters. Quite why a ten year old would have such a dangerously sharp weapon in her closet or how she would have sufficient strength to commit the crime are two of the many illogicalities that pepper the film. Whether it's the slick production values of Ed Hunt's serviceable direction that masks them, I honestly don't know. Whatever, Hunt's only other film I can recall is *Starship Invasions* with Robert Vaughn and Christopher Lee and like that, *Bloody Birthday* has its moments but warrants no more than passing interest in its intended function as a programmed filler, in this case with *Zombie-Creeping Flesh*.



AMYTVILLE II

Review by
Alan Jones



It was with much apprehension that I approached *Amityville II: The Possession*. I mean, *The Amityville Horror*, inexplicably one of the biggest grossing films of 1979, was a lacklustre affair with timeworn shocks and scares that only proved the gullibility of the public in expecting anything more from American International Pictures than their usual brand of low-grade exploitation. Even Jay Anson's much hyped best-selling work of fiction which inspired it wasn't the dull exercise Stuart Rosenberg's film turned out to be.

So it is with relief that I can report how much of a pleasant surprise *Amityville II: The Possession* turns out to be. It's a superbly crafted, handsomely produced, superior haunted house tale that on more than one occasion will send shivers up your spine.

Based on Hans Holzer's book *Murder in Amityville* and scripted by Tommy Lee Wallace (who has recently directed the soon to be released *Halloween III - The Season of Witch*) *Amityville II: The Possession* turns out to be a prequel to the original film as it tells the full story of the vicious multiple murders that happened a year prior to the Lutz family's now famous tenancy.

The Montelli family move into the Amityville property and almost immediately are subjected to bizarre manifestations and occurrences. The focus of all this demonic attention is Sonny (Jack Magner), the eldest son of Anthony and Deloris Montelli, (Burt Young and Rutanya Alda), and pretty soon he's involved in an incestuous affair with his sister Patricia, (Diane Franklin), and takes to locking himself in his room for extensive periods - even his birthday - as the forces of evil speak to him through his personal stereo cassette machine. Only Father Adamski (James Olson) recognises these classic symptoms of possession when he goes to bless the Catholic family's house but he is powerless to do anything forbidden by church bureaucracy to perform an exorcism. With excrement dripping in the cellar, furniture flying everywhere, paintbrushes daubing slogans in the nursery and her brother mutating before her very eyes, Patricia tries to make one last desperate phone-call to Father Adamski for help. But he has gone on a camping trip where he has a nightmare filled with such horror that he is impelled to return to the Montelli household only to find what he has dreamed was real and that the final devastating reality belongs to him.

Director Damiano Damiani, whose past credits include an arty Bette Davis film, *The Empty Canvas* and a dubious version of Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, makes his American directorial debut for producer Dino De Laurentiis with this film. While I missed some of the rawness that a director like Lucio Fulci would have brought to the proceedings, it is nevertheless a remarkably assured piece of work.

The basic story being now rather over familiar, it is touch and go for the first 15 minutes or so but the moment Franco Di Giacomo's camera starts subjectively prowling around the house, using some breath-taking camera angles along the way, the film takes hold. And when Sonny goes on his mass murder binge, the film will have you gripped by the eerie atmosphere and menace that exudes from the screen.

Standard shock effects combined with this striking method of presentation just can't fail to keep you involved. With some spectacular imagery, like a cloth floating off a table to cover a crucifix and some state-of-the-art bladder make-up effects, *Amityville II: The Possession* is certain to find favour with even the most discerning horror/fantasy follower.



the new y

The strongest and most powerful of all his films to date, Lucio Fulci's *The New York Ripper/Lo Squartatore Di New York* is a psychotic, erotic masterpiece. Rarely has a film, where the accepted barriers of what can be shown in both the soft-core sexual and violent areas for a mass audience, been pushed to new extremes. Fulci's *Dressed to Kill* is indefensible for that reason and therefore absolutely must-see pertinent viewing. Let's dispense right away with the Violence Against women faction – that argument has never, and will never, exist in my mind. Women in peril have always been one of the mainstays of popular storytelling. That fact is never going to change and any misguided furore over such films is a complete waste of time for all concerned. *The New York Ripper* has opened on the Continent to very healthy box-office returns – but then the British have never really understood why this type of film, by genre definition, could possibly have a willing public in the market place.

Filmed on location in New York, the film captures the Big Apples' sleaziness to perfection in a way that no other film has. The pre-credits sequence has a dog finding a severed hand in some bushes by the Hudson River and suddenly the New York Police Department find themselves with a knife slashing maniac on the loose in the metropolis. Enter Fulci in another of the cameos he has a great fondness for as the Chief of Police to warn against the danger of starting a panic on the streets. Almost immediately a young girl is trapped in a car on the State Island Ferry and is found with her throat and abdomen split open. From this moment on, five characters propel the story forward. As the film opens, none of them have ever met but in a typically Hitchcockian way they criss-cross each other at various junctures. *The New York Ripper* with this device reveals a script structure that is Fulci's best yet. On the side of law is of all people, British character actor Jack Hedley as a Detective whose personal life reflects a Jekyll and Hyde approach to the killer. He enlists the help of learned Paolo Malco, (who you will recall from *The House by the Cemetery*) whose closet homosexuality almost condemns him as the killer. Then there is the disfigured pervert Howard Ross who is always on the look out for new thrills and he finds one in the shape of Almanta Keller, the uptown nymphomaniac whose many kinks, (all revealed on screen incidentally) include recording all her debasing sexual adventures for her impotent husband's listening pleasure. Almanta Keller, who I can't recall ever coming across before, gives what is easily the best performance in the film and emerges as the strongest leading female Fulci has had yet. Looking cool, chic and depraved all at the same time are, I imagine, hard qualities to express but she succeeds admirably. Alexandra Delli Colli is the fifth character who becomes a potential victim without knowing it when she criticises her boyfriend's terminally sick daughter. She has already been attacked once but all that remains in her mind about it is a hazy nightmare of being trapped in a seedy cinema with the killer. This dream sequence contains one of the scripts most pedantic clues but all is forgiven because of the style with which it is shot. Quite simply the viewer becomes the victim as the maniac's switchblade lunges and swings at the camera lens. As the screen goes black, a split appears dripping blood and we gaze out from inside the neck that has just been severed.

Each of these five characters is given a



ork ripper



motive for the murders. It could be one of them, but then again it may not be. It is to Fulci's credit that although to some extent the murderer's identity is obvious, he is constantly deflecting our suspicions. It is easy to say when the film is over, "Well I knew all along it was him/her," but I wonder how many of you will fall into the same trap that I did? Over concern with concealing identity is the one area that has always been a traditional downfall of the Italian "giallo" cinema though. Look how it even inflicted doubts on Mario Bava and Dario Argento.

The New York Ripper also shows Fulci has a sense of humour. The coroner who carries out an autopsy on the first victim is shown wearing a personal stereo headset while performing the operation and even television's *Dallas* gets a mention too. Like Hitchcock though, Fulci is concerned more with irony. The first victim who decides to play a joke on the driver who forced her off the road earlier and lives to regret it as she is trapped by the very same door that caused the incident in the first place. Or the phone tap to trace where the murderer is calling from with his Donald Duck impersonation that turns out to be a call-box containing a radio transmitter broadcasting the tortured screams of a girl being razed to death in front of a powerless police force. Most devastating of all is Almanta Keller tied to a bed next to the man she has just indulged in sado-masochistic practices with who is described on the radio as a possible suspect for the murders.

How much of the very graphic violence will get past the censor here, I wouldn't like to comment on. Every lascivious detail is lingered on with a mesmerising relish, so I doubt whether the nipple being razed in half or the moving eyeball being split open will remain intact. I think the same fate will sadly befall Fulci's most strikingly lit set piece which has a girl from a live sex show being violated with a broken bottle.

The only faults I found with the film is firstly its lack of time scale. One red herring relies solely on the suspected murderer being dead for eight days, but the film certainly gives no impression that that length of time has occurred. The motive for the murders too, although lucidly summed up à la *Psycho*, is a trifle thin, although, thankfully Fulci dispensed with the earliest idea he had for this which was an elderly man injecting himself with a secret rejuvenating fluid that is his disguise.

The New York Ripper is in some ways a return for Fulci to the field that started the early wave of his popularity in Italy long before the zombie trend consolidated his position. The film has certain parallels to *A Lizard in a Woman's Skin/Carole* (1971)—violent sex crimes in a sexually liberated atmosphere and a nightmare that either is, or isn't, real. But *The New York Ripper*, which started life as *The Beauty Killers*, is a lot less overtly flashy and hip and a far more sensually charged roller-coaster ride.

I'm fully expecting *The New York Ripper* to be condemned when it opens in the U.K. as a nasty, repulsive bloodbath that snatches its title from the headlines of not too long ago's newspapers. The vociferous minority will probably say that there is no excuse for such gross exploitation, but then they have never been the ones who would pay to see a film like this in the first place preferring to read instead the hypocritical *News of the World*-type coverage.

Art imitates life in all its many ugly forms. Fulci's approach to his source material has never been polite and *The New York Ripper* clinches his position as one of the most influential directors of the past decade.

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Review by
Richard
Holliss

E.T.

THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL
in his adventure on earth

Then comes the most important part: how to review *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*. It doesn't matter a damn if I told you that I detested it, the movie's made so much

money in North America and Europe's cinemas that any discerning cinema-goer won't stop the cinema queue from forming around the ticket. Not that I did. Jones, I'm

ashamed. My specialty, I loved it. You'll wonder: *E.T.* is the movie for me. I was really interested, I laughed, cried and clapped my way through all 95 minutes of it. ▶



I suppose that's all I need to say, but as this is a review I should at least give my reasons why I liked it. Of course it will be fashionable to criticise *E.T.* in certain publications. I have in fact already seen one violently anti-*E.T.* review, but this is inevitable especially when a director becomes too successful for some people's liking, and Steven Spielberg is successful.

The story briefly, just in case you've spent the last year living with Eskimos, concerns a

cute little alien who becomes trapped on Earth when his spaceship is forced to make a hasty exit due to it nearly being discovered by American military or whatever they are. Steven doesn't actually make it clear. All we know is that they're a key jangling, flashlight-toting mob who shout at each other in an unintelligible language and listen in to the secret conversations of individual householders in a style that would make the tv detector vans envious.

Fortunately for the little vis beyond the stars, he is descov adults can capture him by a Elliott played by Henry Thom E.T. and helps him to adapt surroundings, and a marvell develops between the two in family, his brother Michael (MacNaughton) and his sister Barrymore). As usual Spielb obtain some credible perform



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child stars, remember Cary Guffey in *Close Encounters* and Roy Scheider's kids in *Jaws*? He certainly is the Uncle Walt of the 80s.

Finally however, the authorities catch up with E.T. and after our stomachs have ached with laughter at the little fellows antics, Spielberg hits us with the sad stuff, unprepared, already at a delicate point, we break under the strain, bursting into tears on three separate occasions in the last half hour. You have been warned. ▶



There are those - dare we call them pseudo-intellectuals - who will decry this cinematic emotion as a cheap way of selling tickets but, sorry folks, in case you haven't already realized it, that's what movies are all about. I find myself becoming unashamedly involved in the films I see whether they be comedy or tragedy. Some movies are total failures on these grounds, but *E.T.* is certainly not one of them. In the last 60 minutes of *Close Encounters* we see

feature film of its own. It succeeds in utilizing all the latter's technical brilliance with a good honest story that happily resembles the suburbia of *Polyester* with the same richness of character. It is Spielberg's ultimate experiment.

But if after all that you still have the movie, then I can't think what it is that you're actually looking for at the cinema, because *E.T.* is, as most So-Bollywood fantasies are, the summation of how Over the years. Yes that's

right, Steven pinches ideas from other movies just like everybody else. But what upsets most people is that he knows how to market them successfully and make an interesting film, and that's something they can't be said of everybody else.

If the cinema industry, to survive, is a matter of terms on seats then we're right behind you, Steven, as the true cinematograph public.

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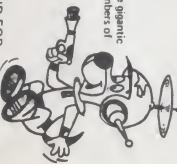
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THE STEVEN SPIELBERG STORY

Feature by Tony Crawley

PROLOGUE

Part One: Toiling in the TVineyards

"There is such a shortage of good directors in television that a person will go right off the launching pad if he can show somebody in charge that he knows what he's doing. Some years ago, Universal wanted us to have a fellow do a Movie of the Week for us at C.B.S. He was 21 years old, I was told... and a friend of the young producer had brought him in. And I said, 'What's he done?'" "Well, he did an episode at Universal." I said, "Forget it!" The next year, they asked again and this time we let him do one. He did a terrific, fabulous film for us (Something Evil; 1971). Just a little ole Movie of the Week. But it was brilliantly executed... That's how I turned Steven Spielberg down the first time. I didn't know who the hell Steven Spielberg was. Well, in the ensuing year he did several other things. We could see more film, and it was obvious that the man was fabulous - and we were lucky to get him."

Perry Lafferty, C.B.S. programming supervisor, 1965-76.

It wasn't a year later, it was two. He wasn't 21 anymore, he was 23. But he looked young enough (still would minus his Lucasian beard, even if a beard is now a Hollywood sign of youth) to make the old brigade question his expertise. Anyway being young is permissible with good credits to back it up - Michael Winner was 23 for years. "I think Hollywood will forgive me once I'm 55," Spielberg chuckles "I don't know what they'll forgive me. But they'll forgive me when I'm 55."

1. SKYWATCH

"I guess I've been interested in strange things that go flash in the night ever since I was a kid growing up in Arizona. The atmosphere was clear there. We had a lot of starry nights. I remember when I was a kid, my father woke me up one night and took me to a hillside at about 3 am. He spread out a blanket and we sat there and watched a fabulous meteor shower. It was... extraordinary!"

"I've had my head in a cloud ever since. Always interested in science fiction, science fantasy, science speculation. I was star-struck. I still am."

"I was born in the same year that Kenneth Arnold sighted what he coined the flying-





saucer. There were perhaps 10,000 sightings prior to his experience, but he coined the term: flying-saucer. From his airplane, he saw these discs that reminded him of saucers skipping over water. And the Press picked up on that and of course, the news spread overnight. "Flying-saucer" became part of our Sunday funnies. And I was born that same year, 1948. So, growing up, I was part of that psychosis — seeing strange lights in the sky, imagining what it would be like to see someone from up there... right here.

"I always believed that we're not alone. I made a film about it when I was around '71 in Phoenix, *Firelight*. It was more of an exploratory movie along the lines of *The Creeping Unknown* (U.S. title for *The Quatermass Experiment*; 1955). But it had lights in the sky. But no, no, *E.T.* isn't that same film. *Firelight* became *Close Encounters*. *E.T.* is a fairy-tale, a modern fairy-tale made out of love by all of us. *Pottergeist* is a scream... *E.T.* is a whisper."

2. I AM A CAMERA

"I was born with a camera glued in my eye. It started with my father getting a movie camera for his birthday. My mother got it for him. (And Momma Leah says when Arnold started shooting baby Steve, he got up and walked straight for the camera, but what mother wouldn't say that about her son, the superdirectorstar. It reads well, anyway). "And I had to sit — as I'm sure everyone has — through *home-movies*! Where the camera's going up and down and you can't see anything. Where you drive by the Grand Canyon at 40 mph and it's a big blur. My father really was an awful photographer.

"I'd just stare at the screen and say, 'Gee, you're not holding the camera steady enough... This doesn't make any sense.' So he just gave me the camera one day and said, 'You be the family photographer. You take the pictures.' That's how it began."

3. HISTORY IS MADE AT NIGHT

Steven Spielberg on the birth of the sky-watching director of the year — the most successful film-maker at the global box-office in history. Since his first cinema feature, *The Sugarland Express*, in 1974, an estimated billion dollars has been spent on Spielberg movies around the world. And his latest, his greatest — apart from 1941 (1979), his latest is always his greatest — is close to pushing *Star Wars* out of the frame as the biggest single money-maker in screen history.

That, for now, is old news. What else has been filling the headlines these past months from America — and now Europe. Steven Spielberg, himself, is also old news. Directing in television since 1969, and hitting the cinema first with a tele-movie released in Euro-cinemas, *Duel* (1971), then with *Jaws*, which took 78 days to topple the previous champ, *The Godfather*, in 1975. Then *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (CE3K), twice; 1941, and once was too much; *Raiders of the Lost Ark*; and now the kind of phenomenon that makes the rest pale into even a multimillion dollar insignificance, *E.T.*

More, though, has been written about his films than the Spielbergian *wunderkind* himself. More about him than from him.

Not anymore. Welcome to The Steven Spielberg Story. Told in the main by Spielberg himself, culled from my tapes of interviews, lectures and media confluents all over, from Madrid to Cannes, from London to Los Angeles. If it's not a definitive portrait, it comes close...

4. A BOY'S LIFE

For the record, Steven Spielberg was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1948. The actual birthday seems a guarded secret. (Some writers insist it was in 1947, in a lame attempt to make the guy older than he is). He was raised in New Jersey and later in Arizona, when the family (he has three sisters) moved to Scottsdale, outside Phoenix, for the suburban kind of life he continually depicts ("and never mocks — my life comes from there") in his movies. "You saw my house when you saw *Close Encounters*, *Pottergeist* and *E.T.* The house in *E.T.* is very much like the house I was raised in. That's my bedroom. And the little girl, Gertie, is an amalgamation of my three, terrifying sisters."

Terrified, is more like it. His early experiments in creating fear in others was scaring the panties off his sisters — "to the point of cardiac arrest." His mother, Leah, 62 now running a kosher deli in West L.A., comes replete with tales of how young Steve gave the girls hell. Hovering under their bedroom window was favourite; he'd wait until they started nodding off and start whispering, "I am the moonnnnn..." He's not without a few such stories, himself. "I remember a movie on television with a Martian who kept a severed head in a fish bowl. It scared them so much, they couldn't watch. So I locked them in a closet with a fish bowl. I can still hear the terror breaking in their voices."

Cute kid. Oh yeah, a barrel of laughs... like the time he was 15 and his father brought home one of the new transistor inventions. "This," pronounced Arnold Spielberg with all due gravity, "is the new age." Oh really, said Steve, picking the transistor up — and swallowing it. "My parents called the police to get it out."

He did a fair old job on scaring himself, as well. "My biggest fear was a clown doll," he told *Time* magazine's Martha Smilg. "Also, the tree I could see outside my room. Also, anything that might be under the bed or in the closet. Also, *Dragnet* on TV. Also, a crack in the bedroom wall. I thought ghosts might come from it." (They do in *Pottergeist*).

Well, it all added some excitement to what was, otherwise, a well-guarded childhood, far from the nitty-grittier tension of urban life. His was an environment controlled as much as those on his future film sets. "I've never been robbed or in a fistfight. I never saw a dead body. Until I went to New York City, I'd never eaten real Italian food. Walt Disney was my parental conscience and my step-parent was the TV set. I'm not saying that being sheltered is a good thing, that it's good for kids who live in the outskirts not really to get a sense of what it's like to be a person in a real world of movement and energy and in many ways, of hostility. But if I hadn't been a Boy Scout, I'd probably have ended up as an axe murderer or butcher in a Jewish deli."

(No doubt, his youth *had* to be sheltered by his folks. I seem to remember a movie called *The Phoenix City Story* (1955) which portrayed the city as being damn near the headquarters of the American underworld).

Scaring the girls was about the only thing for a kid to do in Scottsdale. True, Hitchcock came shooting some of *Psycho* in Phoenix in 1959. But the great Hitch didn't mean a lot to an eleven-year old whose parents selected movies which he could or couldn't see. He didn't get to view *Psycho* for some years. Steve's censorious folks preferred more avuncular product.

"It was Walt Disney. Or it was *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). Or it was nothing... They were very strict about movies, and this was before the rating system came in. I was more terrified by Walt Disney movies than any of

the horror films my parents told me I mustn't go see! First time I cried at a movie, it was a Disney movie. *Bambi*. No, *Bambi* (1942) came later. I went to that with a young girlfriend and I thought it was unmanly then to cry... at age eleven. First time I cried at a movie was in *Fantasia* (1940) and also in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). First time I ever had nightmares for a week was in a Disney movie, too. There was a great sequence also in *Fantasia* which had a great impression on me - Night on Bald Mountain. I've never looked at mountains the same way since. Neither did Richard Dreyfuss after *Close Encounters*!"

He was, apparently, not that bright at school; his grades weren't enough to get him into film school later on, anyway. Socially, he wasn't part of the crowd, never running with a set, not into sports or cars, or for a while, girls. Just movie-cameras; 8mm to begin with, then 16mm. "But I'll never forget the time I discovered girls. I was in the fifth grade. My father took me to a drive-in movie with a little girlfriend of mine. This girl had her head on my arm. Next day, my parents lectured me about being promiscuous at an early age."

He's often compared his youth to an American TV sitcom - "the kind that ABC buys for a season before they drop it." He was the typical square (if extremely thin) peg in a round hole. Neither a sports jock or the class wimp, although he does recall hating dissecting frogs in junior high school, and running outside to vomit with the others. "And the others were girls." He was last in line, if in line at all, to be picked for any baseball team. "The Retard," the guys called him, having seen his spindly body in the gym. At six, according to family snapshots, Spielberg looked rather like a first draft of *E.T.* All arms and (one difference from *E.T.*) ears.

5. FACE TO FACE

There is a young character actor in Hollywood, seen in *Grease* and used twice by Spielberg in 1941 and his production of *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (1978). His name is Eddie Deezen. And he looks much like Steve must have as a teenager. A bit of a nerd. Like most film buffs when young, really (Spielberg obviously liked Deezen. He had him as a ventriloquist with a look-alike dummy when trapped atop 194's Ferris-wheel).

Spielberg's youth is familiar to any chroniclers of scrawny kids who become top comedians; from Jerry Lewis to Bernie Winters. They found, with some surprise, they had a talent for raising laughs, impersonating the teachers or whatever, which makes them suddenly not just part of the crowd - but ahead of it. Accepted, at last. Different, sure. But clever. Steve was no comic. Just this dab hand at photography and amateur movie-making. His surprise talent made him an Eagle Scout at the tender age of 13 and finally won over the high school guys. And dolls.

6. THE ATOMIC KID

Well, there wasn't a whole lot else to do with his time... "Phoenix, Arizona, is not exactly the culture centre of the United States," he says with a laugh. "We had *nothing*! except, probably, the worst television you've ever seen. They showed one movie on three different channels. *The Atomic Kid* (1954). They kept repeating that for years. That's all I really saw. I knew Mickey Rooney really well at the end of my stay in Phoenix, Arizona. I was a TV kid. *Mickey Mouse*. *Sky King*. And *The Atomic Kid*!"

"My parents were afraid of motion pictures. They kept me out of the movies ever since I can remember. They put their own ratings on

them. 'You can see that film because Walt Disney made it. You can't see this picture because Minnelli made it'... and, you know, there might be a beautiful woman, back-lit, in it."

And so, unlike George Lucas and the other movie-brats out of the University of Southern California (U.S.C.), who made the kind of films they thrilled to at the Saturday matinees, Spielberg began making the kind of films he wanted to see any damned day of the restrictive week. "My first movie was a four-minute western on 8mm. A couple of school friends were the cowboys and I used a cactus as the backdrop. I couldn't afford a horse."

He could only afford the film-stock after whitewashing neighbours' citrus trees - up to thirty a day at 75 cents a tree. He was nothing if not a dedicated film-maker at age 12.

By 13, he made his first fully-scripted venture. At 14, he won a contest with a 40-minute war film, *Escape to Nowhere* (1961). Somewhere along the way there was another gung-ho number, *Battle Squad* and at 16, he made his seminal movie, *Firelight* (1964). This was his first as film, the first with flashing lights; 140 minutes of us vs. them, extra-terrestrials from way up there. It was also his first commercial success. The movie cost him 500 dollars to make (that's a lotta trees). His father hired a Scottsdale cinema to show it in. One night only. The box-office take was 600 dollars. He'd begun...

In all, Spielberg made as many as fifteen schoolboy movies. He wrote his own scripts, drew his own story-boards. As the "family photographer," his holiday home-movies became little dramas. For effects, he'd shoot his own electric trains crashing at full speed, or as Leah Spielberg recalls, get her to boil cherries-jubilee until the pressure cooker exploded passable blood over floor and walls.

He also recruited his schoolmates, of course. "It was fun to get them dressing up. Difficult to keep them interested, though. I could only shoot on weekends. Monday through Friday, I was in school. Saturday and Sunday, when they really wanted to go out, have a good time, I required them to come over to the house and be in a movie. For the first few weeks they loved it. They were great! After that other interests developed. They got into cars. They got into girls. They wouldn't turn up and I'd replace actors, re-write characters out of the movie. That was the major problem."

He laughs. "It still is a major problem!"

7. WELCOME TO L.A.

Around this period, the Spielbergs moved to San Francisco. His parents divorced when Steve was 17, and he'd taken himself off to college. Try as he might (and he did, showing all his movies), he couldn't get into U.S.C., where Coppola, Lucas, Milius, Carpenter, etc, were hanging out in film class. He couldn't get into film school at all and went to California State U., at Long Beach, as an English major. "I was actually just staying there so I wouldn't have to serve in Vietnam. If the draft had not been after me, I probably wouldn't have gone to college at all."

Rather than English, he spent more time catching up with movies. Studying them. "I used to go to the New Art and Vegabond theatres. They'd show retrospectives all the time. Anything that wasn't American impressed me." (Same went for the U.S.C., crowd; excepting Carpenter). "I went through a period of Bergman - I think I saw every picture Ingmar Bergman made. It was wonderful. You'd got to the theatre and see all the Bergman's films one week. You'd go to



the same theatre the next week and see... maybe Jacques Tati. I loved him! Truffaut is probably my favourite director. I saw all the new wave French films while at school. The new wave was very important for young Americans as well as the French.

"So, my only education in film came very late in life. I had to rely on television to show me the rest. Late night television." (Even today, the TV is rarely if ever switched off in his Coldwater Canyon home in Los Angeles. He watches it in bed from about 8.15pm and uses it, he says, as Valium).

"By then I had decided - oh, long before high-school, I guess - to make movies. So over those four years at Long Beach, I did almost nothing except watch movies and make movies. I earned enough money working in the cafeteria and other odd jobs to buy a roll of film, rent a camera from Burns and Sawyer and go out weekends to shoot small experimental films. I made one about a man being chased by someone trying to kill him, but running becomes such a spiritual pleasure for him, he forgets who's after him. I did a picture about dreams, how disjointed they are... I made one about what happens to rain when it hits dirt.

"They were personal little films that represented who I was. Then, I made a slick, very professional-looking film, although it had as much soul and content as a piece of driftwood. *Amblin'* (1969), and not *Ambulance*, as once printed in *Time Out*). That was the film that got Universal to sign me to a seven-year contract."

He makes it sound easy. It wasn't. It never has been easy to crack Hollywood's defences. "It's a slow and arduous evolution," he agrees. "A boring story. And I'm not going to bore you with it. Except to say you have to believe that I wanted it so bad, I kinda camped out on everybody's doorstep until I shook someone's interest loose and they'd look at my movies. That's the major problem in Los Angeles. And I found it myself today with young film-makers coming to me with films and saying, 'Can you please look at my film?' I look at as many as I possibly can (he's also given 5000,000 to the U.S.C. film school and is shepherding some newcomers' entries into Film City). But I couldn't find anybody to screen my films when I was trying to break in. I had something under my arm, it wasn't just enthusiasm and ambition knocking on Hollywood's door. It was, you know, the films I'd made in high school and college. 'Please look at them!' Nobody would..."

8. I AM LEGEND

With nothing happening, Spielberg decided to force a break for himself. A literal break-in at a studio, in fact. This is the celebrated Spielberg legend of crashing Universal's tight security, taking over an empty office, hanging out on sets and editing suites, until (or so he figured) somebody would figure it was about time he had something to do. Like a TV or cinema script to shoot.

There are many who doubt this story; Michael Pye and Lynda Myles' *The Movie Brats* book call it a myth. It's been called Spielberg's best unfilmed scenario. True or false, he tells it well. And as John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) taught us, if world history had not, when there's a choice between truth and legend... print the legend!

"I got past the guard at the gate," Spielberg chuckles. "That was easy. You see I wore a suit and tie, carried a briefcase (and looked, therefore, like any Universal man in the typical Lew Wasserman uniform). I felt 15½ at the time. I couldn't believe it! I remember Scotty - he's still the guard at the same gate!

I broke into - claimed he left me in because he thought I was the son of Lew Wasserman, the head of MCA-Universal. I found an office, not hard to find at that time. There were a lot of empty offices at Universal. And I simply moved in. "The sad part of the story is, you'd think, I'd suddenly have this Orson Welles sandbox, this great playpen - and all the opportunity in the world to use it. But it was a very bad experience. I was more frustrated watching other directors at work and still not being able to get anybody to look at my movies or even stand still for five minutes to talk to me. I was sitting in an office with a telephone. Nobody to call. Nothing to do.

"I gave up watching other directors - it's not healthy. They'll take you into their confidence and tell you why they're going to do something. But movie-making to the casual observer is a long, boring, sometimes cacophonous process. It drove me out of the stages into the cutting-rooms. I would hand out with the editors. I spent a year with them at Universal. They loved having me around. I'd sit with them and they'd show me how and why they were making a cut. I even cut a few *Wagon Trains*, you know - cuts and trims which I wasn't supposed to do because I didn't have a union card. That was the raw beginning."

That is also one reason why his story is disputed. *Wagon Train* ceased production after 227 shows in 1963, when Spielberg was still in Phoenix, aged 15. So what? So it was another telly horse-opera. Print the Legend!

He finally got so bored waiting for his phone to ring, he packed up and left. "They never found me out. I was thrown off the Alfred Hitchcock set when he was making *Torn Curtain* (1966). I used to sneak on the set to watch. They had assistant directors on all the doors and they'd turn me around and march me out. I really wanted to watch Hitchcock work. I'm a major fan of his. But they wouldn't let me back on the set."

"Now we flash forward years... *Jaws* was on release - and Hitchcock is shooting *Family Plot* (1976) on the Universal lot. I thought: Great, finally I get my chance to watch Hitchcock. So, I walk on the set and he's sitting with his back 100% to me. There's no possible way he could see me. All of a sudden he waves an arm in the air to an assistant director, who walks over. Hitchcock talks to him, then gets up and leaves the soundstage. Very quickly! He could walk very fast! The assistant walked directly to me and said, 'Mr Hitchcock feels that it disturbs him that you're watching him, would you please leave the set.' And I was kicked out... after *Jaws* I never met him."

Maybe they wouldn't stop, stand, sit or screen, but Spielberg met a lot of other people at Universal, none of whom seemed to question his actual function there (he'd engineered his name on the switchboard list of extensions, which was, apparently, proof enough of his importance). One guy he met in the hall did agree to view his films. His name was Chuck Silver and Spielberg has never said - if he knew - what Chuck was doing at Universal, either. He hardly cared as the guy plainly loved his movies and started taking them around town to show people.

Steve also showed his seminal *Firelight* to a man running a commercials studio. Burn moved "I gave him two of the best reels. I came back a week later and he was fired. Gone! His office was cleared out and now there's a Toyota dealership where the office used to be... So part of *Firelight* still exists, but all the exposition is gone."

9. SQUARE JUNGLE

At weekends (for a year) he was still making

the film that would open Universal doors. "While I was at Long Beach, I was lucky to meet a man who was as ambitious about producing as I was about directing. The difference between us was that he was a millionaire. Dennis Hoffman. He saw some of my 8 mm and 16 mm films and said he'd give me 10,000 dollars — which to me was a bloody fortune! — to make a short film. But he wanted the possessory credit. That means the film said: Dennis Hoffman's *Ambly*." I said, Fine! I took the money and I made the film (about hitch-hiking) in 35 mm, 1.85:1 ratio. The big time for me!

"I hired a cinematographer, as anxious as I was about getting into his line of work professionally. And I made this picture which impressed the head of Universal Television, Sid Sheinberg. Once again, it harkens back to my friend, Chuck Silvers, he took his 25-minute short (entered in the 1969 Atlanta film festival), ran to Universal, showed it to Sid and I got a call next day — it's truly a Cinderella story — inviting me to his office.

"He's a very nice man, Sid. Very austere. He sat there in his French provincial office overlooking Universal, like a scene out of *The Fountainhead*. He always calls people, Sir. He said, 'Sir, I liked your film. How would you like to go to work professionally?' And... well, what are you gonna say to that? And he laid out the whole programme. 'You sign the contract and start in television. If you do a few shows and other producers like your work, you can maybe branch out into feature films.' It was a dream come true. I mean, it was all very vague, but it sounded great.

"I signed the contract. Without an agent. A week later, I wanted out... when I found out exactly what I'd be doing at Universal. Which was camping out in the same office. With the same telephone. Nobody to call. Nothing to do. No producer on the lot was going to give me a break. And I had a seven-year contract. I didn't read the fine print. I was locked in for seven years. I couldn't work anywhere else. I couldn't earn independent financing. I couldn't go underground where my friends were happy making 16 mm films. I would have to be professional. I would have to work within the Establishment — but nobody would give me a job in the Establishment.

"I was trapped. Couldn't get out. "And I went to Sid and told him this and he finally, I think, twisted somebody's arm — or broke it off! Because of Sid I began my career at a very abnormal age. He got a producer to give me shot at the pilot for a series to be called *Night Gallery* (aired by NBC on November 8, 1969). It was three stories in two hours. I was left only the second segment. The script was terrible. It was by a very good writer, Rod Serling. But the story was not one of his best (about a blind millionaire buying the eyes of a debtor to see with for twelve hours). And I didn't know who was going to be in it. They said: Take it or leave it. And, of course, I took it. I would've done anything. I would've shot... I dunno... the Universal directory if I had to — to get on a soundstage.

10. MOMMIE DEAREST

"I began re-reading the macabre script, trying to make it interesting visually, and it turned out to be the most visually blatant movie I've ever made. Which goes to show how much the script inspired me! Then, they called me one day and told me Joan Crawford was going to star in the show. That's when the cold sweat began."

He was six weeks short of his 21st birthday and he'd been given, not Orson Welles' train set to play with but one of the heaviest Hollywood mommas to handle in his pro

debut. It could have been worse. Bette Davis might have wanted the part.

"I never got over the idea of directing Joan Crawford!" He winces. "She was great, she treated me like I had been directing fifty years. But I did an awful job. I was so frightened that even now the whole period is a bit of a blank. I was walking on eggs. I was told not to change one word of dialogue or they'd have me... they'd put sprocket-holes up and down my sides. I had no idea I was telling a story. To me, it was just a menu of shots, a memorandum of things to do each day. It was only when I saw the show years later that I discovered the story I was telling.

"I remember I had a good tan at the time and it left me the first day of shooting. Fortunately, the actor Barry Sullivan saw the colour drain away and not come back. He took me aside — I'll never forget this — and said something which has stayed with me although it's an old cliché. He said, 'Life is short. Don't put yourself through this if you don't have to.' And I really didn't want to do the show. I said to Sid Sheinberg, 'Jesus, can't I do something about young people?' He said 'I'd take this if I were you.' I did. It was my first opportunity to direct something, professionally. I struggled through it somehow, and Barry was with me all the time. (He didn't forget Sullivan, either — casting him in his final tv endeavour, *Savage*, in 1972).

The pilot film led to a series, Rod Serling's follow-up to his 1964-cancelled *Twilight Zone*. Serling's *Gallery* ran for three seasons (1970-72) and became the proving ground for, among other new directors, French-born Jeannot Szwarc, who eventually made a little something called... *Jaws II* (1978). It comes, then, as no great surprise that for his new anthology chiller movie this year, Spielberg has picked up, dusted off the older, more popular and cultivated *Twilight Zone* title, rather than *Night Gallery*. Because the result of his much worked for debut, that run-in *Mommie Dearest*, herself, was — nothing. Zilch! No offers for a full year. Then, to his relief, his seven-year marriage to Universal ended in divorce. Well, a separation. His contract was suspended.

"I don't know if you've ever not been to bed for four days in a row? Shooting *Night Gallery* was like that. I don't take drugs. I never have. Or I would have used every drug under and over the counter at that time. That show put me through dire straits. It was good discipline but a very bad experience... I remember doing shots through baubles hanging from chandeliers and sitting in dailies (rushes) and the producer next to me would go, 'Ohhhh.' It was really a disturbing experience. And the reviews were awful. Some critics said I shouldn't have done it — because of my age. All of a sudden, the age-factor began to plague me as it has done over the last ten years.

"I was the only young director at Universal — the only one under 35. I'd just turned 21 and most of them in episodic television were over 45. I was so unhappy, they let me out of the contract for a year. I went into the underground to make films in 16mm. And I couldn't! I couldn't raise a hundred dollars to make a film! So, I spent the year writing screenplays" (never his strongest forte) "and went back to Universal after a year, pleading poverty. I said, 'I'll do *Marcus Welby M.D.*, I'll do *Night Gallery*, I'll do *The Name of the Game*. Give me anything! And I began to pay my dues, as they say, and direct episodic television."

11. TUNNELVISION

Penitently, he did 'em all. From the first





Columbo in 1971 (the series pilot film, not either of the two *World Premier* tele-movies which got Peter Falk in his stride and mac) to Owen Marshall, Marcus Welby, *The Psychiatrist* and *The Name of the Game*—for an sf chapter, *L.A.2017*. He built a reputation for thoroughness in planning and execution even if *Variety's Columbo* review never mentioned his name. That, too, was the name of the game. Toiling in the fields of the great unknown, the great unwashed at television.

"I didn't appreciate television at first, but it taught me to plan my movies. I don't think my approach had changed that much since then. I use the same method. Well, in other words, I use the old Walt Disney method where you plan everything in advance, leaving enough elbow room if the cards tell me to change everything and do the scene entirely different. On all my movies, I have more fun making them at home on the easel, with paints, crayons, sketch pencils, than I do actually filming."

That's very Hitchcockian, of course. So is his tele-developed sagas of ordinary man (Weaver, Dreyfuss, Ford and now young Henry Thomas) in extraordinary situations; balancing humour and terror; and taking immense care in the physical execution of scare sequences. Hitchcock told me once that he had more creative pleasure in simply preparing his films; he had shot them in his head and was bored having to go to the set and shoot them again. Spielberg hasn't quite got to this stage. Yet.

He was ready then, for *The Big Break*. And it came with *Duel*, Richard Matheson's gripping suspense of salesman Dennis Weaver being hounded into a death-run on the highways by a smoke-belching ten-ton petrol lorry. It was Spielberg's first tele-movie for two years—and 120 others had been made since *Night Gallery* two years before. Incredibly, he shot *Duel* in just sixteen (meticulously planned) days in Solidad Canyon, California. It was networked in America on November 13, 1971, and later, almost as an afterthought after he won a "Special Mention" at the twelfth Monte Carlo TV festival it was released to European cinemas. This movie made Spielberg's name in Europe—and as a new force to be reckoned with back at Universal's executive Black Tower.

12. ENGLAND MADE ME

And he thanks the British for boosting him, in general; the former Sunday Times critic, in particular. "Dilys Powell kicked off my career. She saw *Duel* and then arranged another screening in London for the critics. As a result, the film company spent more money that they'd intended on the film's promotion." Including entering the film in Euro-festivals (it grabbed the top Avoriaz fantasy prize in France in February, 1973, and the jury's special award at Taormina, Italy, five months later. Universal also sent Spielberg over here on a publicity jaunt. (Well, he'd made his first feature by then, so the studio hyped two films for the price of one).

Italian critics saw *Duel* as a struggle between the two sides of America, with the fiendish truck naturally presenting the big business, the capitalist Establishment. They pushed hard at Spielberg to talk politics in Rome. He didn't. In Madrid, he stuck to Hollywood politics—studio and union rules which prevented him hiring the younger editors he wanted, let alone doing any cutting himself. "If anyone sees you using moviola, you're sure to be fined," he told astonished critics. "The cameraman's union wanted to fine me, to, for riding a camera on a TV show, *The Psychiatrist*. But Universal talked them

out of it."

Of course, it did. The kid looked like being a winner and they wanted to keep the wonderboy's nose clean.

13. DUEL IN THE SUN

"*Duel* was taking a chance. A lot of people taking chances," comments Spielberg about his breakthrough. "I first read the story in *Playboy*. Suddenly, everyone was interested in the film but no one really knew how to make it." Spielberg did and went to work at his easel; producer George Eckstein (or Universal) insisted on Dennis Weaver starring—his *McCloud* contract had clauses for several tele-movies. "He didn't wanna be the guy the way he was written," recalls Spielberg. "Dennis wanted to be much more aggressive. He wanted to encounter the truck three or four times himself, with no help from me or Richard Matheson... I felt very strongly that he be a mild-mannered businessman of the henpecked variety, needing a major change in his life. His life needed changing, as they say in the Old West."

He spent more time on casting his truck than worrying about Weaver (who came round, anyway). He ordered a line-up of trucks at Universal, a veritable auto-audition. He inspected them in ranks like an army and chose one with a bulkhead upfront which helped hide the driver (*Bullitt* stuntman Carey Loftin), making the vehicle even more of a mystery nemesis. Driverless, in fact.

"It's an indictment of machines. And I determined very early on that everything about the film would be the complete disruption of our whole technological society. Keys falling out of locks. Kids playing with wind-up toys. And especially where the truck was concerned. I wanted it to be the true, perfect, perpetual-motion machine." An automotive forerunner of Bruce the *Jaws* shark. In fact, he once nearly turned down *Jaws* thinking people would say just that...

"Dennis Weaver's whole life is very much like the truck's. If you look at the whole picture in perspective, he is as regimented about his lifestyle, about getting to work on time, as the truck is waiting for people behind cul-de-sacs, ravines and canyons. If you look, very, very carefully, the truck has about 17 notches on its bumper."

"But it absolutely *loves* children! It helps the school bus full of children, when it's broken down. Gives it a push and helps get the engine re-started. At first you kind of panic. You think the kids are about to be overrun by this lorry. Dennis Weaver panics and runs away..."

The resulting 74 minutes became a unique piece of television Americana. No cops. No 'tacs. Just one guy on the road being scared out of his tree by this one ominous *Jaws* of the roads... and having to do something about it.

"The subject matter was unusual, yes," agrees Spielberg. "I also cut most of the dialogue. The script had a lot; so did the story. I cut it out. I actually wanted to make a feature-length silent movie. No dialogue at all." Many directors dream of pulling off this trick, but none in Hollywood has managed it since actor Ray Milland directed and starred in *The Thief* in 1952; even Mel Brooks chickened out for the sake of a weak gag in *Silent Movie* (1976) by having, of all people, French mime Marcel Marceau speak the film's only line(s). (No one laughed; few knew who Marceau was).

"But finally I had to come to terms with the network executives. The whole across-the-table chat with people in suits... I promised to shoot some dialogue. There's maybe 35 to

40 lines in it. That's unusual for television!" From there on, he was left alone, none of the people in suits asked or cared about how he'd shoot the film ("they never do"). He solved the complicated auto-choreography by drawing a mural rather than story-boards; a bird's-eye or helicopter view of the entire chase, allowing him to plot each and every event on hills, corners, lay-bys and so on along his chase route, and of course, decide where best to plant his cameras.

"Very interesting to look at an overview like this – and see straight down and along the entire movie. I could plan three or four camera set-ups at the same time – the only way I could have made this film in 16 days. I used two cameras every day and four for some of the chase footage, run-bys past the cameras. I'd set up a chase across a two-mile running course and just stake the cameras on high-hats, or legs, or they were hand-held, on different parts of my race-track, let's say. The truck would chase the car and go through a number of moves – over-taking, closing the distance, bumper to bumper. It was all choreographed between the stunt-drivers and the cameras would gradually pick it up at certain intervals. I think I shot more film than for any television – at least 20,000 ft." (A normal 90-minute movie in 35 mm comprises about 8,095 ft.)

He wouldn't have shot *Duel* any differently if it had been a cinema movie from the outset. "I'd've taken more care in the camerawork and set-ups and asked, maybe, for another 16 days – 32 days would have been a good schedule on a film like this. We had three-and-a-half weeks and as rushes were 61 miles away, I only saw rushes every three days."

He would have also kept Weaver's screen-wife (Jacqueline Scott) right out of the picture. "You see her once in the cinema print – a phone conversation from her end. A major mistake! I don't know why I shot it. But when C.I.C. wanted to release the film, they had to have 90 minutes, not 74. I shot all the added 15 minutes but C.I.C. demanded to see Weaver's life on the other end of the telephone. I guess I was so enthusiastic about getting this film seen theatrically in the 1.85:1 ratio that I went ahead and shot the sequence which the producer, George Eckstein, had written. To this day, I don't think Weaver's character needed that kind of lead-pipe overkill!"

Someone else is only seen in the cinema release...

During the director's interview-lecture session at The National Film Theatre in 1978, a keen-eyed buff asked about the alien in the back seat of Weaver's car. "I've been waiting six years to meet you," yelled Spielberg. "You've got good eyes. That's me in the back seat!"

On TV, he was framed out of sight by the 1.33:1 television aspect ratio: he'd never noticed himself in rushes or when cutting the film – "you lose a few millimetres on both sides of the screen on a moviola." Having cut and dubbed the film – "I was certainly very happy with it" – he ran it once in the cinema widescreen 1.85:1 ratio and caught himself in the back seat, giving Weaver directions. He didn't think anyone noticed him (it's a split second or two on screen) and it was too late to change anything. Besides, for television he was out of the scene. "If I was really a dedicated film-maker, I would've blown those shots up once the film was going to Europe in 1.85:1. But if there's something I hate more than seeing myself in a movie, it's seeing grain on screen. I just let it go... and not many people have picked up on that."

Throughout Europe, Australia and Japan, they picked up on *Duel*, though, making an improvement in Spielberg's stock at

Universal. Or it did, eventually... "I didn't think *Duel* would make any money. But it did. (Six million dollars in Europe, alone). In the studio system, the minute something is successful, everybody connected with it takes three giant steps forward – whether they've contributed anything creative to the show or not! So everybody got ahead... The studio asked me if I wanted to make a feature – that was the start of *Sugarland Express*. Jack Marta, the cameraman, went under contract to Tom Laughlin and worked on the *Billy Jack* films. Frank Morris, the editor, suddenly was taken off episodic television and put on features only. And Dennis Weaver would have gone much further but he couldn't get out of playing that cowboy McCloud for the next three years!"

15. CANNIBAL ATTACK

In fact, Spielberg had to wait that long for his movie debut, too. He wasn't hot until *Duel* hit overseas in 1973. Despite the film's critical success in America (by now, reviews were naming and praising him), he was still stuck in the tv vineyards, searching for an exit. (Even after *Duel*'s triumph, it was just so much footage to Universal which used twelve minutes of the chase in an *Incredible Hulk* episode in 1978. Bitterly annoyed, Spielberg had his contracts re-written, "so no one can cannibalise my films and regurgitate them into some other show. I'd hate to see the *Mother Ship* from *Close Encounters* end up in *Laverne and Shirley* five years from now.")

16. PAY THE DEVIL

At least, he wasn't stuck on the sidelines seeing 120 other tele-flicks being shot before directing *Something Evil* for Perry Dafferty's CBS programming. This horror number, kicking off CBS's year on January 21, 1972, was written by Robert Clouse, shot by Bill Butler (the *Jaws* cinematographer) and starred Darren McGavin (fresh from Richard Matheson's *Night Stalker* on ABC) and Canada's Sandy Dennis (as the usual, young(ish) couple moving into what proves a thoroughly creepy farmhouse. Spielberg's malevolent force this time was not out to round up the wife, but possess her.

There followed a longer gap, however – of some 125 Hollywood films made – before Steven quit his tele-days with *Savage* (ex-*Watch Dog*). The circle was complete. He ended where he began – helming a Universal pilot movie with Barry Sullivan in the cast. It was an idea for a possible new series slot for the *Mission Impossible* couple, Martin Landau and Barbara Bain. It proved impossible and the Landaus came to London instead for Gerry Anderson's *Space 1999* series instead, in 1975. Even with Spielberg's acknowledged visual flair, *Savage* was tele-Kleenex. Universal merely updated it's essential private-eye hero to a post-Watergate investigative reporter – Paul Savage was his byline. Apart from Barry Sullivan (as a judge), Steve had at least another friend and supporter on his farewell set, cinematographer Bill Butler.

Once *Savage* was screened on March 31, 1973, Steven Spielberg's dues were paid in full. Free at last, due to *Duel*'s Euro-returns, to make movies. He was even invited to. "Got anything you wanna make as a feature?"

Silly question.

Part Two: can be read in this month's cinema magazine (issue 9), on sale where you bought this copy of Starburst.





Feature by Alan Jones

Add the name of Peter Mackenzie to the ever growing list of special make-up effects men. His company, Coast to Coast, have just finished the multitude of gore effects required for the Caroline Munro/Joe Spinell starrer, *The Last Horror Film*. According to 21 year old Mackenzie, it will probably be the first, and last time he will be working in this particular field. He started as an apprentice at 16 with Chris Tucker, one of the masters of foam appliances in Britain and he worked with him on the television series *I, Claudius* and during a stint on *Star Wars*. After that he moved into the BBC TV effects department as assistant designer where he worked on assorted programmes like *Doctor Who*. After 1½ years there, and after working for a short time on *Quest For Fire*, he left to form his own company.

Working on *The Last Horror Film* literally came out of the blue. "I was woken up one morning to be asked if I would be free in two weeks time to do a couple of simple effects in the South of France. My first reaction was to say no, but I thought about it – if they were simple it would be pretty easy, so I changed my mind. The two simple tricks turned into five weeks of hysterical trauma." According to Mackenzie, the concept of the film has changed a lot from the original script, a lot has been added, and a lot has been taken

away. "The whole theme of the movie is contained in a sequence that we added. Joe Spinell goes into cinema and is physically sick by what he sees on the screen passing as entertainment. It is supposed to be a comment on what people feel about horror films, but whether this will come across or not, I don't know. There are now three heavy twists at the end of the movie that may save it, I can't really tell."

For the horror film within the horror film sequence, producer Judd Hamilton (Munro's husband), gave Mackenzie and his team of four assistants carte blanche to devise a particularly nasty effect. "The film was supposed to be this really tacky/schlocky fun movie so we had an old lady attacking a young boy. She squashes one of his eyeballs, then slits open his chest and pulls back the ribs removing his lung, then yanking out his heart and sucking the blood from it. It is purposely over the top – we were more restrained with the other deaths."

Mackenzie found himself upgraded to Director of Effects when one of them didn't quite work out on the first take. "It was partly my fault and partly David Winters' (the director). The shot required a dummy of actor Glen to have it's throat cut and for blood to spurt out onto the bathroom mirror. Everything was done on location and the bathroom we used was so small and crammed with technicians. When I told Judd that I thought we needed to see more of the

recess into the throat before the high pressure hoses pumped blood onto the mirror, it caused a major bust-up, but I knew he could see my point of view, so I was made director of all the scenes involving my make-up so that hopefully we could avoid any future delays. The upshot of the scene is that as the body is discovered, the head rolls off and falls into the sink."

The one effect Mackenzie is not happy with is the one involving the chainsaw. "The original script said, 'someone gets a chainsaw swept through them and they fell to their stumps, the legs falling either side!' Well, apart from the fact that could never never happen, it was an enormous task. We had to simplify it. Now you see the victim facing away from the camera and as the chainsaw swishes, he turns round with animal intestines oozing out of an attached appliance. We took a night to shoot it and it lasts all of five seconds in the completed film. It isn't very convincing so I'm least happy with that".

The hectic shooting schedule devised to catch to Cannes Festival meant that the film was constantly being changed. "At one stage we were asked to be in front of a building with an articulated male dummy in 12 hours to film a fall. We worked through the night and arrived to find they now wanted a female dummy. Suddenly you have to improvise which is really upsetting as you have made something good and you have to finally go on



set with something interior and that is what people think you've spent the last 12 hours doing!" Another impossible request according to MacKenzie was to fill the Cannes promenade, La Croisette, with dry ice for a dream sequence. "We were given five hours and one dry ice machine to accomplish that. We had to eventually reschedule it to a smaller street, and even then, with some other rickety French dry ice machines and a faulty walkie-talkie it was a huge undertaking". Another part of the dream sequence involves Munro giving Spinell an Oscar . . . "And it disintegrates in his hand. This was simply achieved by filling a fine wax shell with a fake liquid metal and bathing it all in red light".

Time was another enemy as MacKenzie found out when they came to film Gary Martin's death. "He is shot with a harpoon and as he is pulling it out, courtesy of a telescopic dummy, he loses his balance and is dragged beneath the water by a mysterious stranger. It should have been a stabbing by the stranger but there just wasn't enough time for that, so we took this short cut".

The Last Horror Film with locations completed in Cannes, Geneva and New York may yet still have other scenes added. "There is talk of going to Wales and although the budget is up to 2 million dollars, I wouldn't be surprised if they contacted me for further effects if in the editing stages they decide that the films needs a bit more oomph."



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It saddens me that some of you Trekkies out there have mis-interpreted my benign efforts to bring you intellectual enlightenment and have heaped abuse upon my head as a reward. It was only to be expected, I suppose, but it is deeply upsetting all the same. What really upsets me is the suggestion, made by a reader in issue no 51, that my critical thumbs-down on *Star Trek II* was a deliberate act of perversity on my part and that I failed to recognise the movie's true brilliance simply because I wanted to irritate my dear little Trekkie friends. Tsk Tsk. I also resent the implication that I alone among the film reviewers didn't like *Star Trek II* – a solitary madman going against the tide of world opinion. This isn't so. For example, London's *Time Out* magazine said, "The net effect between embarrassed guffaws is incredulity: a movie at once post-TV and pre-D.W. Griffith."

And Philip Strick, author of the excellent *Science Fiction Movies*, and a far erudite dissector of the sf cinema than I'll ever be, wrote in the *Monthly Film Bulletin* (no 583): "... a major portion of the blame has to go to Nicholas Meyer, who appears to have sacrificed style to speed at all times and directs with such a lack of visual flair that the film often looks as arbitrary and ugly as a preliminary script rehearsal. It's a poor tribute to what should have been the spine-chilling death of Spock that he dies after a tussle with what resembles a stand-up ashtray, slumping decorously thereafter in unsullied blue eye-shadow while Kirk paws at him from the other side of the glass. And if the climax is disappointingly misjudged in this way, the trivia of the preceding narration is even less appealing, despite elaborate mugging from the cast in an effort to bring it to life. Only Ricardo Montalban looks as though age has improved him since the 1966 *Star Trek* episode... the rest, sadly, most often resemble a tribe of petulant old men, nagging, nodding and simpering at each other as if persuaded that the codes of conduct hinted at in the script might really add up to a major philosophy."

Right on, Mr Strick! However I was let down by my favourite film critic of all (no, not me), Pauline Kael of *The New Yorker*. She actually *liked* the movie, calling it "wonderful, dumb fun." Oh well, everyone is entitled to one mistake but I have a sneaking suspicion that my heroine is a secret Trekkie...

And that reminds me – another angry Trekkie, also writing in *Starburst* 51, accused me of trying to be a poor man's Harlan Ellison! I mean, really! Everyone knows that Harlan Ellison is a poor man's John Brosnan. Even Harlan himself has admitted that he'll never be capable of writing anything like *Skyship* (copies still available!).

Actually, to digress a moment, I must tell you how Harlan helped two great talents get together. It was back in 1976 during his first, I think, visit to London. After having dinner

with some friends and myself he returned to his hotel to find a handsome young man sitting in the lobby reading a copy of *The Horror People* by yours truly. "Would you believe," Harlan told the handsome young man, "that I have just come from dinner with the author of that book?" Amazingly, the handsome young man was none other than Alan Jones whose writing talents are lavished upon the pages of this magazine and *cinema*. Harlan invited him along to a party being held in his honour and that was how I first met the multi-talented Mr Jones (he has only two flaws to his character – he liked *Flash Gordon* and he liked *Star Trek II*).

But no, I've never tried to imitate Harlan Ellison. No one could. Besides, he's a copyrighted creation. To be honest, I've always fancied myself as the waspish writer that Clifton Webb played so memorably in the 1944 *Laura*. Remember him? He was the one who used to type his lacerating columns in the bath (I tried this once but the electric typewriter fell into the bathwater, producing a scene not unlike the one at the beginning of *Goldfinger*).

And while we're in this honest mood let me say sincerely to all you Trekkies – I did not say that *Star Trek II* is a lousy movie just to annoy you, I said it because it is a lousy movie.

Let me give another example of the sort of thing that annoyed me about it, on top of what I said in *Starburst* 49 – The famous Ceti Eel in Chekov's earhole episode. Now we've been told that the parasite is the only natural life form on the planet and that Khan and his people were the first humans ever to set foot on the place. In that case *why* has an alien organism evolved whose prime function appears to be the burrowing into of human ears and the taking over of human brains? This creature is obviously highly specialised and needs human beings to survive (though what it gets out of the cortex cuddling routine isn't made clear) yet how on Earth, or Ceti Alpha V, has the species managed to survive without humans or any other life forms? It's described as a *parasite*, for heaven's sake... Don't the script writers know what that word means? No, of course not. And it doesn't matter to them because they're not writing science fiction, they're writing a series of scenes that don't require any logic or dramatic unity but simply have to produce a specific response in an audience that has been self-conditioned to react to familiar situations, phrases (eg. "That is not logical.") and characters like Pavlov's dogs.

Star Trek II is not a motion picture, it is an appendage growing out of an old TV series. It has no self-contained cinematic value of its own, and this is what the *Time Out* critic meant when he described it as "... A movie at once post-TV and pre-D.W. Griffith."

Uh oh, better beam up again Scotty. Things are looking bad down here. Scotty? Where are you? Come in, Scotty... HELPI



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Back in 1979, I was commissioned by *Starburst* to write a two-part article on *The Avengers* starring Diana Rigg and Patrick MacNee. I chose this particular series because it seemed to me to be the most universally acclaimed and the one most relevant to the magazine's subject matter. Now at last Channel 4 has brought back *The Avengers* for a whole new audience. There are, of course, those who will remember it from the late sixties, but there will also be a great number of people seeing it for the first time. Whatever else occurs from this re-screening I'm sure there will be a tremendous following for the show and a whole fan club revival.

In America the mystique surrounding this most sophisticated of English series has never faltered, and episodes are constantly being repeated coast to coast. Having recently seen a number of *Avenger* episodes, including those from the Linda Thorson series, I can state quite categorically that with the sole exception of clothing styles, the episodes have not dated. The humour and the suspense is as fresh today as it was then.

So this month, for you *Avenger* fans, here are some up to date details on the *Avengers* phenomenon. Firstly does anyone remember the *Avengers Appreciation Society* of a couple of years back. Well that's now collapsed for a variety of reasons although there are probably a few people who feel that an explanation would have been the right thing to do, especially if like me you had parted with the £2.00 membership fee.

However to make up for this Dave Rogers (no association with the previous club) has formed a new appreciation society called *On Target*, which is recognised by EMI as the official one. Dave is in fact the author of a soon to be published book entitled *The Avengers. A Definitive Collectors' Guide to the Popular Television Series*. Alongside Dave in this new venture is Stephen Curry, who together with his wife Joy, act as researchers for the group and provide all the latest information regarding the series. Stephen is also responsible for the British distribution of a new American fanzine called *With Umbrella, Charm and Bowler*. A delightful title that is lifted directly from the German television version of the series. Anyone interested should contact Stephen at 39 Guildford Park Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5NA.

The third member of *On Target* is Martin Cater, who is responsible for the layout of the magazine. This will appear quarterly and the *On Target* team proudly boast of a large collection of never-before-seen stills from the series and 850 pages of previously unpublished studio material. So if your intrigued by the sound of all this, the address to contact is *On Target*. . . *The Avengers*. 114 Dartmouth Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. ST6 1HE.

Recently the American publication *TV Guide* released its annual Fall preview issue

and there's plenty of interesting facts crammed between its 226 pages. It is quite possible that a number of the new shows will eventually turn up on British TV. Amongst the movies on offer for the autumn period in the US are *Kramer vs Kramer*, *Being There*, *Starting Over*, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, *Private Benjamin*, *The Rose*, *Dressed To Kill*, and *The China Syndrome*. For younger viewers, ABC is launching an animated series based on the video game *Pac-Man*, and for William Shatner fans, ex-Captain Kirk makes a screen appearance in the police drama series *T. J. Hooker*.

For fantasy buffs ABC is releasing a series based on those famous tales of the uncanny, *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. The host will be Jack Palance, stepping into the same shoes as stalwarts of the tv short story, Alfred Hitchcock, Rod Serling and more recently James Coburn. Then there's *Knight Rider* starring David Hasselhoff as an undercover cop who turns to fighting crime with the aid of plastic surgery, a new identity, and a super computerised car called KITT. Veteran actor Edward (Ghost and Mrs Muir) Mulhare plays the young man's rich benefactor.

On a lighter side there's a spin-off from Archie Bunker's family tree, *Gloria Stivic* is her name and she is accompanied in the series by character actor Burgess (The Penguin) Meredith. Bob Newhart stars in his own series for CBS and Robert (Vegas) Ulrich stars in a new action packed adventure entitled *Gavilan*. In the *Reiders of the Lost Ark* class of rip-offs there's a new show called *Tales of the Gold Monkey*, and still with rip-offs a tv version of the 1954 MGM musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, starring a massive cast of unknowns. (Unknown in Britain at least.) From the creators of *Taxi* comes a new comedy series called *Cheers*, about a bar in Boston and the people who drink there.

ABC have resurrected the old Tony Randall sit-com *The Odd Couple*, except its now called *The New Odd Couple* and its two stars are black. Science fiction-wise everything's quiet on the Irwin Allen front, although Peter Barton stars in a new series from the producers of *The Six Million Dollar Man* called *The Powers of Matthew Star*. Described in the ad as "a high school Superhunk and a secret Super-hero." Best of both worlds, I suppose.

To round off, Cable TV will be screening *Chariots of Fire*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Missing*, *Outland* and *True Confessions*. There will also be the usual pot-pourri of bizarre programmes with even more bizarre titles, including *Mysteries of the Mind* with Apollo Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, proudly advertised as containing "fewer interruptions", *Memories with Lawrence Welk*, *Miss America Pageant*, *Soap World*, *Tom Cottle Up Close*, *Ooh-La Lingerie*, *Hardhats and Legs*, and would you believe, a new detective series called *Remington Steele*? Any guesses to the possible sponsor?



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Same date. Same place. Different hotel. Otherwise the Deauville festival finished, for me, the same as last year. Rapping with Harrison Ford over mid-morning coffee about his alter-egos. Han Solo. Indiana Jones, Rick Deckard. In the twelve months between, his Ridley Scott film has opened — immediately hitting the No 1 spot in London, while *Raiders*, playing on and on, controls the No 10 spot. He's finished his third *Star Wars* venture — and his last, he says. And he was all set to be resting before his next serial role, in what's known so far as *Indy 2*.

But he seemed taken by complete surprise with my news, via Lucasfilm, that four more Indy films are being prepared. "They must be talking to Roger Moore," he quipped.

At this time last year, Harrison arrived in Deauville direct from the Venice festival, and before that London. If it's '82 it must be *Blade Runner*. ... Next stop: Brussels for the film's Belgian premiere and to receive The Star of the 80s award, following the voting of 50,000 readers of *Cine-Revue* magazine. Then, it was Paris — and home to L.A. And, in fact, hunting for a new spread far away from "the silly state".

Again, he was accompanied by his girlfriend. But she, alas, was hiding from all scribes. Melissa Mathison, unknown at Deauville last year, had since scripted the film of the century, *E.T.* She was being rather bashful about it. "She suddenly finds herself a celebrity writer," said Harrison, "and she doesn't want to be a celebrity writer. She just wants to write, ya know?"

In fact, the only major change between Ford '82 and last year's model is that the chassis was looking much leaner than ever... his beard had gone (did Solo's grow in the freezer?) and his professional glasses were back... and his boys, Ben and Willard, voted to stay home this trip. "Well, they're 16 and 13 now," he drawled. (Where does it all go? When I first met Ford, they were 11 and 9). "Willard has a kung fu class and didn't wanna miss it. Ben's in a baseball team..."

One other marked difference was that he talked volumes. Harrison Ford usually gets his answers out of the way in a sentence. Or two. (All the more so, if he's just completed the talkabout route from London to Venice to Deauville). Once in a while, and when you're least expecting it, he'll throw you a curve — a complete paragraph.

This year, he was far more relaxed. After the third or fourth question, he stood up and slid off his jacket, hung it on the back of a chair, sat back down again, poured another cup of coffee... and stretched.

This year, it transpired, he had more than his coat to get off his chest...

REVENGE OF THE JEDI

Starburst: This time last year you were telling me that Jedi closed the book on Han Solo. Or so you thought. Did it turn out that way?

Harrison Ford: Well, as far as I know, yes. Because the story that Han Solo was a part of, a natural part of — which is *The Adventures of Luke Skywalker*, in my guise of best friend — is over. The story completes itself in this third film.

No regrets?

I had a great time on *Jedi*. I'm glad I did it. I'm glad I did all three of them. But, as well, I'm glad... (pause)... I don't... (pause)... have to do anymore.

Do you get the Princess?

In this time of women's liberation, "get" is hardly the proper word! This is just one of the many state secrets that I can't divulge.

Do you know where the other *Star Wars* tales are headed?

I think that the next three precede in point of time the first *Star Wars*. Check. But you seemed to indicate just now that the next three, at least, also close the chapter on *Luke Skywalker*.

I don't know... But I should think not.

Well, you said that your role as best pal was over in what was, really, *The Adventures of Luke Skywalker*. And his ventures certainly didn't begin before *Star Wars*...

I don't want to be the source of disappointment for millions of children, so if there's anyway to check it out — check me out! I just work there. I'm not constantly in touch with the latest developments.

RADIO WARS

I know you were out of the country at the time, but did you want to act in the radio version of the films?

I was working when they did the first radio version and then, when they started to do the second one, I figured since I hadn't done the first... I would free myself of that obligation.

Have you heard the shows?

(Pause). I'll say no.

BLADE RUNNER

I'd like to check a nagging issue about *Blade Runner*.

Sure...



HARRISON

The narration! I gather this was a last-minute idea and more ordered by The Ladd Company than by Ridley or the original script. That's what I'd like to check.

Umm...

However political you have to be about it.

Well, I wanna be... frank with you. But I want to be careful here. The voice-over was always Ridley Scott's idea. From the beginning, I had ambitions to avoid the voice-over because I thought it might be...

Well, really, I don't wanna get into this!

Why not?

It seems unfair to criticise a film that has been completed. And anybody can do it. I mean, it's real easy to jump on it after a film is done.

Everybody does it...

I'm not talking about critics here. I'm talking about people that participate in the process and say, "Hey! That wasn't my ideal!" That's not right. So, if you'll do me the favour of just avoiding that... Late at night, over a drink someday, I'll be happy to tell you the whole story.

Like Deauville '83...? The film has innumerable influences from other movies. Were you also consciously exploiting the old Hollywood private-eye role as Deckard?

No. No. I had no concept of that. I only had a concept of the film. I was dealing with the script. With that script. With that movie. I had no reference in my mind or was unaware of any influence exterior to the script. I know that Ridley Scott had said that he wanted the character to be "sort of like Philip Marlowe". And I'm afraid that has been stamped on the characterisation in a rather unfortunate way.

Well, that's due to the voice-over a lot... Ridley may say that line, but as you always say you've seen so few films in your life, you must come to such films fresh. You must find it useful that you've not seen that many old movies.

Well, as useful as it is, I'm still stuck with this line. In every interview someone mentions that either I'm like Humphrey Bogart or Philip Marlowe. You could say that *E.T.* was like *Bambi*! But it's not really appropriate. I understand the appropriateness of the question, but it was never a concern of mine. Ridley, in fact, from the beginning, had wanted the character to wear a big, felt hat along with the raincoat. And my resistance to that wasn't based on the fact that it would make me look like, for instance, Humphrey Bogart but that I had just worn a big, felt hat in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. And I wanted to change my physical appearance. So, thank God, I didn't wear a big, felt hat. *You sure did a fine job of switching your appearance, though. Was the short hair, etc., all your own suggestion?*

The haircut was my idea. And I had to talk Ridley into it because he was afraid it would make me less gorgeous! The haircut couldn't be done unless Ridley was there. And it took nearly four hours to get it from about this (he touches his regrown hair) to that (he points to a Deckard still on the wall). With long pauses along the way for consideration by Ridley.

My ambition had always been to get it right down. Real short. I wanted to give the impression of a character who had given up on himself, was unconscious of his appearance, and has lost to a very large degree that ego that keeps us doing things like combing our hair,



N FORD

brushing our teeth and all of that. I thought it was important to suggest that and, as well, change my appearance to some degree.

I think it's more interesting for the audience. Even if they know right away who it is, they don't have the same expectation if you don't look the same. Gives you a foot forward.

You decided the almost crewcut was important — did you then make sketches of how you wanted to look or anything?

Well, I decided if I didn't have a hat, the hair was going to be a constant ... *(He laughs)*. Well, one of the other things that drives me nuts when doing a four months' shooting schedule is when somebody is going like this *(checking the hair, brushing, fluffing and combing it back into place)* between every shot. I just can't stand that! It just drives me nuts. If I could have short hair on every film ... I mean, some of my best friends are hairdressers, but it does drive me nuts! First thing I do after a film with long hair is cut it off!

And grow a beard like this time last year ... You had some of Indy Jones' unshaven look as Deckard, actually.

Well, *Blade Runner* takes place in three days. The first day of *Blade Runner*, I'm shaved. When the events begin to take over my life, it hardly seems a proper time to shave ... when things are going the way they are in *Blade Runner*. There doesn't seem time for a bath and a shave. So that's really why it happens in that film. I think that's the kinda detail that goes up to make a character. I try not to lose sight of those little things.

How do you manage to keep a three-day growth of beard over a four month or more schedule as Deckard or Indy, anyhow?

Oh, I have a special attachment ... A special barber's shear, you know. Electric clippers with a fence or gate on them, which holds the blade off the skin just enough to do that. It's done. It's great. I love it!

*You mentioned not wanting to disappoint children, millions of children, earlier. How are they taking to *Blade Runner*? Like your two lads, for instance.*

I think they felt that *Blade Runner* hadn't been made for them as much as *Raiders* had.

That's true. And you — pleased to have made one for us adults at last? Robert Altman says Hollywood is only making children's films.

Frankly, I had never considered the *Star Wars* films or *Raiders* to be kids' films. In fact, in America, they're heavily attended by both sides of the 25-year-old line. And I certainly thought if you were to play it like it were a children's film, it would certainly take off a certain amount of ... well, I don't know what that would do, but it wouldn't be good for me to think that way.

So I'm not conscious of them being kids' films. And I'm not really conscious of *Blade Runner* being an adults' film ... although in America it is restricted to those of 17 or older, except they're accompanied by a parent.

You sound as if you do not agree with the rating.

I think it's because of a really unfortunate and ill-advised attitude about the violence which is contained in the film. The character that I play—and I am conscious of violence in a film. I labor it when it is used for the sake of itself. I was anxious to make sure that this character represented an abhorrence of violence. And he does! He wanted to get out of the police force before because he couldn't stand the killing.

After every incident of having to kill someone, the character's revulsion is clear. And, ironically, what he's killing are not human beings. That's what the thematic backbone of the film is. They're not really human beings! And yet, his empathy with something that looks like a human being—which is later to lead him into a romance with, basically, a machine—affects him. Even though they're not human beings.

She's some machine!

Yeah. She's very beautiful.

The film appears to be doing better in Europe than America.

This is an English movie in a way, isn't it?

English?

Well, no, I suppose it's really not.

When they were going to shoot it in London, you didn't want to know about it.

Yeah. I had been too long in one place. You've got to travel on, travel on.

DIRECTING

To where? Have you thoughts of directing, for example?

No, I really don't have any ambition to be a director.

There's a certain amount of self-direction in acting, anyway.

I don't think of it as self-direction. I think of that as film technique.

Certainly, I enjoy to be directed. When you have a good relationship with a director it's ... fascinating! To be able to work as hard as you can and know there's somebody out there that you can really depend on and trust to give you more information about what you represent, this is interesting. Fascinating!

Any word of George Lucas directing again?

I hope he does. It's been a long time. Yeah, I hope he does.

Do you get to see him very often?

Just when we're working, really. Every once in a while we'll get together. But he is, as you say, living on different sides of the state to me.

SCOTT vs SPIELBERG

An English film, you said ... Was there that much difference between working with a Briton like Ridley compared to your Hollywood directors?

No, I don't think that was because he's European. He's just a different kinda director. He's a more visual director than most I've worked with. *More visual than Spielberg ...?*

Well, now, that's hard to say. Because Spielberg is one of ... is the most visual person I've ever met! But in a different way, Steven's visual technique is such that whatever you do, he can find a way to put it on film that gives it its best chance of being seen. He puts the best kinda framework around it. And it's *(He snaps fingers)* instantaneous—like that!

Ridley Scott is different in that he tells the story through visual means. That's the way he wants to work. There's a little difference. But I find it hard to make distinctions and compare directors.

Oh, you always say that ...!

Well, it takes a long time and really is complicated—to be fair about it.

Okay, that's another issue for Deauville '83.

Right.

(Pause). That's the end of my little speech.

Good one, too.

More than I ever wanted to say. But that's why Hollywood movies are so exportable. Because we're filling a need. We've got something that people want.

PRODUCING

What about producing, setting up your own movies?

So far, I haven't been able to figure out a way of becoming involved in the process like that. One of the major problems of developing a property for yourself, or having something developed for yourself, is that it tends to be made for you.

And who you are is what you want to change!

I would prefer to come to something that has a strength of its own, a life of its own, and then add something to that. I feel if somebody makes something for me, they're going to use what they think are my strengths. Maybe they'll try to stretch me a little bit. But they'll always have me in mind. I want them to have a character in mind. Then I want to come in at the last minute.

I don't even want to hear that somebody has written something with me in mind. I'd prefer to have them write something for you. It would be much more interesting for me to play you, than for me to play me. And I think that's much the same for the audience as well.

They'd find me very boring—even if you played me! Is this the trouble with other scripts coming your way—they're Harrison Ford trips, not characters you'd like to play ... to be?

No, I think not. I'm happy to say I get a real variety of scripts. And from





a variety of film-makers. And, I'm sure, for a variety of reasons. Some of them quite cynical. People say, why haven't you done this sort of film—an intimate film, say? Well, now we're seeing a film that I did a year ago, *Blade Runner* took about half-a-year of my life. Before that, I was intensely involved in another film... There isn't the time to do that many different kinds of films.

One of the things that intrigued me about *Blade Runner* was that it was different from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. And I continue to look for something different.

Such as?
I've done comedy in the past. I think it's about time I do another comedy. But in all the comedies I read, the ambitions are so slight! The film has so little to offer, really, other than... jokes. I'm looking for a comedy with high ambitions.

Not a glorified sit-com.
Exactly. Half of them, you look at and think, well this should be on television. Why are we going to go and make this as a movie. People won't go. They won't go to a film unless it has something.
Where are all the comedy writers, anyway. Gone to TV every one? Yeah, they're working in television.

SCRIPT SORTING

Then I suppose there are several thinly disguised Han Solo of *Indy* Jones scripts...
Oh yeah. But I can spot them in seven pages. Many of the scripts I get, I

don't read past page seven. Or I read the synopsis and say, "Okay, I'd really like to read this script because somebody has put a lot of work into it." But I don't have time to read this one.

How many scripts do you get per week?
It's different every week depending on what's going on. But about twenty a week come into the office. Sometimes more, sometimes less. This is your agent's office, your manager's or what?
Well, they send them to my business manager as well as my agent. My car mechanic gets a stack, too!

What happens to them?
They go to somebody to read and prepare a synopsis for me. I read the synopsis which says this is what the character is... and then I can say, I don't want to play that character right now, it's too close to something I've just done, or this is something I don't want to be concerned with. If it is something I want to be concerned with, I read the full script. I don't have time to read them all, myself, frankly.

What's the criterion then in accepting a script?
The primary question is: Do I want to spend four or six months of my life doing this.

Wearing this man's clothes?
Yeah! And working with these people. As well as the considerations about the script, there is the consideration of working with this director in concert with this script. Maybe the script is appealing but in my humble opinion, the director is not appropriate to the project. Or I don't think we'd have a good relationship. It's very complicated to make that decision. But it's always my ambition to do something different.

INDY 2

What's the score at the moment—how many films are you due for in 1983?

Actually, I'm only committed for one film at the moment. That's another Indiana Jones film which starts in April. I had hoped to have one year off between the end of *Revenge of the Jedi* and the beginning of this next *Raiders* film. And these *Blade Runner* promotional duties have eaten into that time. But I'll still have nine months left.

In fact, Lucasfilm has just announced another for *Indy Jones* films. That's five in all.

Oh, have they...? (A smile of complete disbelief crosses his face). You mean you don't know about this...?

They must be talking to Roger Moore then! One at a time for me. Sounds then if George is quickly going to have to come up with a son or daughter of *Indians Jones*.

That's okay with me. I mean, I really enjoy working on them. And I enjoy the character very much. And certainly, I couldn't hope for any better company than Lucas and Spielberg. But I shouldn't think I would... Having done one, I don't think I'd do four more of anything! That's what I figured. What shape is the *Indy 2* script in—and what's your input into it?

It's coming along and I haven't had any input into it. I stay way out of it until there's a revised first draft. Then I'll talk to Steven about it... when I have a chance to read it.

Is Larry Kasdan scripting again?
No, the writers this time are Gloria and her husband Willard Huyck. They're the people who wrote *American Graffiti*, among other things. And your introduction to George as the guy in the cowboy hat, Bob... er... Falfa, was it?

Bob Falfa is the character I played in the film, yeah.

"A long, long time ago..."
It is, yeah.

OFF SCREEN

What are you doing before *Indy 2* begins—staying home?
Pretty much. Yeah, pretty much. I have a couple of things... I want to find a property outside Los Angeles. Some place as a retreat. Looking for that is one thing that might take me away from home.

Is that a property to move straight into, or to re-model and do some famous alterations and woodwork in?

I don't have a complete fantasy about it. I just want to be in another environment. Hopefully one where I don't have to be known as anything but a distant neighbour.

In California?
No, I think I said outside the boundaries of the silly state... I think some place probably like Colorado, Wyoming or Idaho. Where all neighbours are distant.

Sounds as if you're planning to hide out.
I don't hide. I'm virtually interested in my career and I like the work I do. I've no intention of hiding from it. I just feel it's necessary to have a different experience. I want to get up in the morning and... er... oh, round up cows or something rather than... whatever. Now I get up every morning in my house, read the newspaper and drink coffee. I just want a different kind of situation to go to.
From what you're saying, that's both off-screen and on.
Good enough. Yeah, Fair enough.



ON-SCREEN

You still say you see few movies?

Well, I've never even seen *Gone With The Wind* (1939) among many other great movies. Somebody asked me what the last movie I saw was and I told them, *E.T.* And I realized that it was about six months ago I saw it!

Yeah, well that does tend to put you off all other films for awhile. Damn few films reach E.T.'s level.

As well as that being true, that's one of the things that's intriguing about films. Their variety. I wouldn't like to see any particular kind of film overwhelm the industry so that all we have is a flood of imitations. That's an odd remark coming from you. It's your films that are overwhelming the industry.

But I don't expect every film I make to be a commercial success, period. And to be an enormous commercial success, this is something that never occurs to me. As often as it's happened, how could you anticipate that it would happen again? My luck is enormous.

But my skills at seeing into the future are not really as great as my luck. Also, I'm not looking for commercial viability. I'm lucky enough to have had enough success that I feel I can deal with a certain number of films that are not going to be big, commercial successes.

Every film you make has to have its potential to make its money back and make a fair enough profit, so that people don't feel they've wasted their time. So, yes, I want that. But I'd also like to make films for a

smaller segment of the audience. You just don't take the demographics and then make up a script that reflects the concerns of the broadest number of people. You work in another way—from the other direction. (Pause) But *E.T.* sure is a good movie. It's held me for a couple of months. I don't need another movie-fix for awhile.

So that's why you see so few films. You catch a good 'un and then take a rest?

But I'm really very embarrassed by my lack of . . . knowledge about film.

Really?

I used to think so. I think I developed a habit of not going to films at a certain point because I was really anxious to be more of a success than I was at that time. I was frankly afraid of adopting other people's solutions to the kinda problems you face when making a film. So I didn't go to movies for some time. Now, it's hard to get me to go—for a variety of other reasons. I'm sure when I get older I'll go to movies all the time.

You could build a mini-cinema into your new retreat and catch up. I suppose I could do a lot of things. . . . But I haven't started yet. I don't have a screening-room at home now. Or a swimming pool, for that matter.

